THE MORALITY OF SHAKESPEARE's DRAMA ILLUSTRATED.

Dorothea THE Crampe

MORALITY

OF

SHAKESPEARE's DRAMA

ILLUSTRATED.

By Mrs. GRIFFITH.

Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur
Ire poëta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit;
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut magus; et modò me Thebis, modò ponit Athenis.
Hor.

DUBLIN:
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M,DCC,LXXVII.

HENRY the FIFTH

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

HENRY the Fifth.
KING OF FRANCE.
THE DAUPHIN.
DUKE OF YORK, } Uncles to Henry.
DUKE OF EXETER, }
DUKE OF BEDFORD, } Brothers to Henry.
DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, }
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.
BISHOP OF ELY.
EARL OF WESTMORLAND.
EARL OF CAMBRIDGE, } Conspirators.
LORD SCROOP, }
SIR THOMAS GREY, }
DUKE OF BURGUNDY.
DUKE OF ORLEANS.
FLUELLIN, a Welch Captain.
RAMBURES, } French Lords.
GRANDPREE, }
The Constable of France.
SIR THOMAS ERPINGHAM.
MOUNTJOY, a French Herald.
BATES and WILLIAMS, English Soldiers.

WOMEN.

ISABEL, Queen of France.
CATHARINE, her Daughter.
A LADY of the French Court.

Dorothea Crumpe

THE

MORALITY

OF

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ILLUSTRATED.

HENRY the FIFTH.

ACT I. SCENE I.

THE ſudden reformation of Henry Prince of Wales, upon his ſucceſſion to the crown, is a fact recorded in hiſtory; and there have been ſufficient inſtances of ſuch an exertion of latent virtue in mankind, upon record, to evince its not being a thing unnatural; though, ſad to ſay it, not enough to prevent its being reckoned in the claſs of uncommon events. Let us but lend our own aſſiſtance, and grace will ſeldom be found wanting. This extraordinary character is moſt beautifully deſcribed in the example now before us.

Canterbury *and* Ely, *diſcourſing about the King.*

Cant. The courſes of his youth promiſed it not—
The breath no ſooner left his father's body,
But that his *wildneſs*, mortified in him,
Seemed to die too; yea, at that very moment,

Consideration like an angel came,
And whipt the offending Adam out of him;
Leaving his body as a paradise,
To invelop and contain celestial spirits *.
Never came reformation in a flood,
With such an heady current, scowering faults †;
Nor ever hydra-headed wilfulness ‡
So soon did lose his seat, and all at once,
As in this king.

SCENE II.

Here follows a fine lesson for states and potentates to reflect seriously upon, when they are publishing manifestos, or meditating a war.

The King, and Canterbury, who was president of his council:

Henry. My learned lord, we pray you to proceed;
And justly and religiously unfold,
Why the law *Salic*, that they have in France,
Or should, or should not, bar us in our claim.
And, God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading,
Or nicely charge your understanding soul,
With opening titles miscreate, whose right
Suits not in native colour with the truth.
For God doth know how many now in health,
Shall drop their blood in approbation §
Of what your reverence shall incite us to.
Therefore take heed how you impawn your person ‖,

* What a beautiful and poetical allusion is here made to the circumstance of our first parents being exiled from Eden!

† Alluding to Hercules turning the course of a river through the Augæan stables.

‡ Shakespeare having hinted at one of the labours of Hercules, a second immediately occurred; and I should not have been surprized, in the exuberancy of his imagery, if he had gone through the whole dozen; if it was only for an opportunity of making this reflection, that *a reformation from vice, was an harder task than them all put together.*

§ *In approbation.* In support of a cause he had pronounced to be just.

‖ Pledge your character and conscience.

How

How you awake the sleeping sword of war;
We charge you, in the name of God, take heed.
For never two such kingdoms did contend,
Without much fall of blood; whose guiltless drops
Are every one a woe, a sore complaint,
'Gainst him whose wrong gives edge unto the swords,
That make such waste in *brief mortality.*
Under this conjuration, speak, my lord;
For we will hear, note, and believe in heart,
That what you speak is in your conscience washed,
As pure as sin with baptism.

There is a just description of the nature of government given a good deal further in the same Scene.

Canterbury *and* Ely.

Ely. While that the armed hand doth fight abroad,
The advised head defends itself at home;
For government, though high, and low, and lower,
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,
Congreeing in a full and natural close,
Like music.

Both the distinction and the simile here made use of, are almost a literal translation of a parallel passage in Cicero; and there are so many other allusions of the same kind, to be met with throughout our author's writings, as might lead one into an opinion of his being a tolerable classical scholar, notwithstanding Ben Johnson's invidious line,

"Altho' thou hadst small Latin, and less Greek."

But in denying him the accomplishment of literature, he paid an higher compliment to his genius, than perhaps he meant; as this was to impute to him the greater merit of being possessed of the same fancy and judgment with the best of the Antients, without the advantages of their example or instruction.

The ſubject of the above ſpeech is conſidered more at large, and treated in detail, in the deduction drawn from it in the reply.

Cant. Therefore Heaven doth divide
The ſtate of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavour in continual motion;
To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,
Obedience. For ſo work the honey-bees;
Creatures, that by a rule in nature, teach
The art of order to a peopled kingdom.
They have a king, and officers of ſort,
Where ſome, like magiſtrates, correct at home;
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad;
Others, like ſoldiers, armed in their ſtings,
Make boot upon the ſummer's velvet buds;
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent-royal of their emperor;
Who buſied in his majeſty, ſurveys
The ſinging maſon building roofs of gold;
The civil citizen kneading up the honey;
The poor mechanic porters crowding in
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate:
The ſad-eyed juſtice with his ſurly hum,
Delivering o'er to executors pale,
The lazy yawning drone. I thus infer,
That many things, having full reference
To one conſent, may work contrariouſly.
As many arrows looſed ſeveral ways,
Come to one mark; as many ways meet in one town;
As many freſh ſtreams meet in one ſalt ſea;
As many lines cloſe in the dial's centre;
So may a thouſand actions, once a-foot,
End in one purpoſe, and be all well borne,
Without defeat.

SCENE III.

When the ambaſſadors of France come before Henry, they aſk him whether they may ſpeak their errand in expreſs words, or muſt be reſtrained to deliver

deliver the ſubſtance of it only, in more covert terms. To which he replies:

Henry. We are no tyrant, but a Chriſtian king,
Unto whoſe grace our paſſion is as ſubject,
As are our wretches fettered in our priſons;
Therefore, with frank and with uncurbed plainneſs,
Tell us the Dauphin's mind.

The above ſpeech is worth noting, conſidering the maxim generally. Reſentment may be excuſable in a man, but is unpardonable in a king. In this character he is to conſider himſelf but as one of the ſtates of government only; and legiſlature is diſpaſſionate. Shall a judge ſuffer himſelf to be biaſſed by private pique, when pronouncing a public ſentence? When power is made uſe of to revenge perſonal affronts, royalty ceaſes, and tyranny begins.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Chorus. O England! model to thy inward greatneſs,
Like little body with a mighty heart!
What might'ſt thou do, that honour would thee do,
Were all thy children kind and natural!

This is a reflection which cannot too frequently be made, and ſhould be the preamble to every act or deed of Kings, Lords, and Commons. See the ſpeech and reflection which concludes King John, in this Work.

SCENE III.

If I had attended to the order of the ſubjects, without regarding that of the Scenes, I ſhould have added the following paſſage to the laſt obſervation on the former Act; and to which note I beg leave now to refer the Reader.

The King, on ſentencing the conſpirators, Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, ſays,

God quit you in his mercy! Hear your ſentence.
You have conſpired againſt our royal perſon;

Joined with an enemy proclaimed, and from his coffers
Received the golden earnest of our death;
Wherein you would have sold your king to slaughter,
His princes and his peers to servitude,
His subjects to oppression and contempt,
And his whole kingdom into desolation.
Touching our person, seek we no revenge;
But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,
Whose ruin you three sought, that to her laws
We do deliver you. Go, therefore, hence,
Poor miserable wretches, to your death;
The taste whereof God of his mercy give
You patience to endure, and true repentance
Of all your dear offences!

SCENE V.

The King *of* France, *and the* Dauphin.

Dauphin. My most redoubted father,
It is most meet we arm us 'gainst the foe:
For peace itself should not so dull a kingdom,
Though war and no known quarrel were in question,
But that defences, musters, preparations,
Should be maintained, assembled, and collected,
As were a war in expectation.
Therefore, I say, 'tis meet we all go forth
To view the sick and feeble parts of France;
But let us do it with no shew of fear;
No, with no more, than if we heard that England
Were busied with a Whitsun morris-dance.

Such ought to be the vigilance of all states.—When sovereigns repose their heads supinely in the lap of peace, they must expect to be taken napping at some unguarded hour, or other. The best way of making peace is with sword in hand, they say—Yes—and to preserve it, too.

In the continuation of this Scene, the same speaker adds another rule of prudence and safety to the former.

Dauphin. In causes of defence, 'tis best to weigh
The enemy more mighty than he seems;

So

So the proportions of defence are filled;
Which of a weak and niggardly projection
Doth, like a miser, spoil his coat with scanting.

And again; the same subject is in some sort carried on, with additional reflections.

French K. You see this chase is hotly followed, friends.
Dauph. Turn head, and stop pursuit; for coward dogs
Most spend their mouths *, when what they seemed to threaten
Runs far before them. Good my sovereign,
Take up the English short; and let them know
Of what a monarchy you are the head.
Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin,
As self-neglecting.

SCENE VI.

In the speech of the English Ambassador to the French King, claiming the rights of Henry, there are some truly alarming reflections proposed to the consideration of all states that undertake or maintain a war in an unjust cause; and may be considered as a supplement to Henry's first speech, in the former Act.

Exeter. He bids you, in the bowels of the Lord,
Deliver up the crown; and to take mercy
On the poor souls for whom this hungry war
Opens his vasty jaws; upon your head
Turning the dead men's blood, the widows' tears,
The orphans' cries, the pining maidens' groans †,
For husbands, fathers, and betrothed lovers,
That shall be swallowed in this controversy.

ACT III. SCENE IV.

The same subject and reflections are repeated here, before the besieged gates of Harfleur.

* *Open* or *bark*. Huntsman's phrase.
† The Text is much improved by a transposition of the images in these two lines, according to a note of Dr. Johnson's on the passage.

Henry. How yet resolves the governor of the town?
This is the latest parle we will admit;
Therefore to our best mercy give yourselves,
Or like to men proud of destruction,
Defy us to our worst. As I'm a soldier,
A name that in my thoughts becomes me best,
If I begin the battery once again,
I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur,
Till in her ashes she lie buried.
The gates of mercy shall be all shut up;
And the fleshed soldier, rough and hard of heart,
In liberty of bloody hand shall range,
With conscience wide as hell, mowing like grass
Your fresh fair virgins, and your flowering infants.
What is it then to me, if impious war,
Arrayed in flames, like to the prince of fiends,
Do with his smircht complexion all fell feats
Enlinked to waste and desolation?
What is't to me, when you yourselves are cause,
If your pure maidens fall into the hand
Of hot and forcing violation?
What rein can hold licentious Wickedness,
When down the hill he holds his fierce career?
We may as bootless spend our vain command
Upon the enraged soldiers in their spoil,
As send our precepts to th' Leviathan
To come a-shore. Therefore, ye men of Harfleur,
Take pity of your town, and of your people,
While yet my soldiers are in my command;
While yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
Disperse * the filthy and contagious clouds
Of heady murder, spoil, and villany.
If not, why, in a moment look to see
The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters,
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls;

* *Disperse*—The word in the Text is *o'er-blow*. The Commentator finds fault with the harshness of the metaphor, but leaves it so. I have ventured on this alteration, and have put the verb into the potential mood to preserve the metre of the line.

Your

Your naked infants ſpitted upon pikes,
While the mad mothers with their howls confuſed
Do break the clouds; as did the wives of Jewry,
At Herod's bloody-hunting ſlaughter-men.
What ſay ye? Will ye yield, and this avoid?
Or, guilty in defence, be thus deſtroyed?

What an horrid repreſentation is here given of the too general ſtate of routed battle! A civil war excited among all the wild beaſts of the foreſt, could not afford ſo ſhocking a picture. No creature, but man, joins cruelty with fierceneſs, or adds malice to rage! None, but the *inhuman human* ſavage, Man!

The above deſcription of a victorious enemy is too true a one, if hiſtoric evidence can force reluctant credit—For war has its barbarous *rights*—or *wrongs*, rather—which neither humanity can prevent, nor diſcipline reſtrain, nor juſtice puniſh—War is its own legiſlator, and victory to itſelf a law.

"It is War's prize to take all 'vantages *."

SCENE VIII.

After the ſurrender of Harfleur, when Henry is on his march to Calais, he is met by Mountjoy, the French Herald, who delivers an inſolent defiance from the king of France, requiring to know what ranſom he will compound to pay, for leave to retire alive out of the kingdom; to which he replies,

Thou doſt thy office fairly. Turn thee back,
And tell thy king I do not ſeek him now,
But could be willing to march on to Calais
Without impeachment; for, to ſay the *ſooth* †,
Though 'tis no wiſdom to confeſs ſo much
Unto an enemy of craft and vantage,

* Hen. VI. Third Part. † *Sooth*, an old Saxon word for *truth*.

My

My people are with ſickneſs much enfeebled,
My numbers leſſened, and thoſe few I have,
Almoſt no better than ſo many French;
Who, when they were in health, I tell thee, Herald,
I thought upon one pair of Engliſh legs
Did march three Frenchmen—Yet, forgive me, God,
That I do brag thus! this your air of France
Hath blown that vice in me; I muſt repent.
Go, therefore, tell thy maſter, here I am—
My ranſom is this frail and worthleſs trunk,
My army but a weak and ſickly guard;
Yet, God before, tell him we will come on,
Though France himſelf, and ſuch another neighbour,
Stand in our way. There's for thy labour, Mountjoy;
Go, bid thy maſter well adviſe himſelf—
If we may paſs, we will; if we be hindered,
We ſhall your tawny ground with your red blood
Diſcolour; and ſo, Mountjoy, fare you well.
The ſum of all our anſwer is but this:
We would not ſeek a battle, as we are,
Yet, as we are, we ſay, we will not ſhun it—
So tell your maſter—

There is ſomething extremely fine in Henry's reply to the French gaſconading taunt above. It is uncommon to meet with ſo much careleſsneſs and courage in the ſame character — There is no ſuch deſcription in hiſtory, nor have many people, probably, ever been acquainted with it among the living manners of men; and yet the repreſentation of it appears to be ſo perfectly natural, that we muſt greatly admire the talents of a writer, who could thus realize, in effect, a mere idea.

The bravery of Henry ſcorned to deny the condition of his troops, either with regard to their health or numbers: theſe circumſtances the enemy pretended to have been acquainted with already; or were determined to make an experiment of, at leaſt; he therefore openly acknowledges the truth of his weak ſituation; and this with the ſame eaſe and humour,

humour, as he would have delivered himself to Falstaff, had he been his aid-du-camp for the day.

Upon his royal face there is no note,
How dread an army have enrounded him *;

But, at the same time, he most resolutely declares his purpose of trying the event, at every hazard of life, claim, and liberty.

The contemptuous sarcasms he throws out, in this speech, against the French nation, besides shewing an admirable temper and composure of mind in such difficult circumstances, convey also an apt repartee to the scornful insolence of the Dauphin; who, in return of Henry's demanding his right of succession to the crown of France, sent him a parcel of tennis-balls to play with, in allusion to the slight repute of his former life and manners. Pertness is impertinence; but repartee has the *lex talionis*, or law of retaliation, on its side.

Shakespeare has a great resemblance to Ariosto, whose style had a mixture of humour, with sublimity in it. The late ingenious Mr. Hawkins says of the latter, "His heroes are full of merriment in "the midst of danger, and he seldom describes a "battle without a jest."

SCENE II.

The same magnanimity of character in Henry, is displayed throughout this Play. One of the instances of it we may see in this Scene, out of which also some other things worthy of notice may be picked up. The Reader will mark them as he perules.

The English camp at Agincourt.

Henry *and* Gloucester.

Henry. Glo'ster, 'tis true, that we are in great danger;
The greater, therefore, should our courage be.

* Chorus to Act IV.

Enter

Enter Bedford.

Good-morrow, brother Bedford—God Almighty!
There is ſome ſoul of goodneſs in things evil,
Would man obſervingly diſtil it out;
For our bad neighbours make us early ſtirrers,
Which is both healthful, and good huſbandry.
Beſides, they are our outward conſciences,
And preachers to us all; admoniſhing,
That we ſhould dreſs us fairly for our end.
Thus may we gather honey from the weed,
And make a moral of the Devil himſelf.

Enter Erpingham

Good morrow, old Sir Thomas Erpingham;
A good ſoft pillow for that good white head,
Were better than a churliſh turf of France.

Erp. Not ſo, my liege; this lodging likes me better;
Since I may ſay, now lie I like a king.

Henry. 'Tis good for men to love their preſent pain,
Upon example; ſo the ſpirit is eaſed;
And when the mind is quickened, out of doubt,
The organs, though defunct and dead before,
Break up their drowſy grave, and newly move
With caſted *ſlough**, and freſh legerity.
Lend me thy cloak, Sir Thomas. Brothers both,
Commend me to the princes in our camp;
Do my good morrow to them, and anon,
Deſire them all to my pavilion.

Glou. We ſhall, my liege.

Erp. Shall I attend your grace?

Henry. No, my good knight,
Go with my brothers to my lords of England.
I and my boſom muſt debate awhile,
And then I would no other company.

Erp. The Lord in heaven bleſs thee, noble Harry!

Henry. God a-mercy, old heart, thou ſpeak'ſt chearfully.

* *Slough.* The ſkin of a ſnake, the caſting of which was thought formerly to renew its vigour.

SCENE.

SCENE IV.

And again; his excellent compoſure of mind is manifeſted further, in this Scene; where he anſwers the challenges of the guards going their rounds, but without revealing himſelf. I ſhall here preſent the intire paſſage to the Reader, referring, as in the former inſtance, the ſeveral parts of it which deſerve obſervation, to his own apprehenſion.

Henry going out, enter Bates and Williams, two Soldiers.

Williams. Who goes there?

Henry. A friend.

Williams. Under what Captain ſerve you?

Henry. Under Sir Thomas Erpingham.

Williams. A good old commander, and a moſt kind gentleman. I pray you, what thinks he of our eſtate?

Henry. Even as men wrecked upon a ſand, that look to be waſhed off the next tide.

Bates. He hath not told his thought to the king?

Henry. No; nor is it meet he ſhould; for, though I ſpeak it to you, I think the king is but a man, as I am —The violet ſmells to him, as it doth to me; all his ſenſes have but human conditions. His ceremonies laid by, in his nakedneſs he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they ſtoop, they ſtoop with the like wing; therefore, when he ſees reaſon of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the ſame reliſh as ours are; yet in reaſon no man ſhould poſſeſs him with any appearance of fear, leſt he, by ſhewing it, ſhould diſhearten his army.

Bates. He may ſhew what outward courage he will; but, I believe, as cold a night as 'tis, he could wiſh himſelf in the Thames up to the neck; and ſo I would he were, and I by him, at all adventures, ſo we were quit here.

Henry. By my troth, I will ſpeak my conſcience of the king; I think he would not wiſh himſelf any where, but where he is.

Bates. Then would he were here alone; ſo ſhould he be ſure to be ranſomed, and many poor men's lives ſaved.

Henry.

Henry. I dare ſay you love him not ſo ill to wiſh him here alone, however you ſpeak this to feel other men's minds. Methinks, I could not die any where ſo contented, as in the king's company; his cauſe being juſt, and his quarrel honourable.

Williams. That's more than we know.

Bates. Ay, or more than we ſhould ſeek after; for we know enough, if we know we are the king's ſubjects; if his cauſe be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us.

Williams. But if the cauſe be not good, the king himſelf hath a heavy reckoning to make; when all thoſe legs, and arms, and heads, chopped off in a battle, ſhall join together at the latter day, and cry all, *we died at ſuch a place*; ſome ſwearing, ſome crying for a ſurgeon, ſome upon their wives left poor behind them, ſome upon the debts they owe, ſome upon their children rawly left. I am afeared there are few die well, that fall in battle; for how can they charitably diſpoſe of any thing, when blood is their argument? Now, if theſe men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king, that led them to it, whom to diſobey were againſt all proportion of ſubjection.

Henry. So, if a ſon that is ſent by his father after merchandize, do fall into ſome lewd action, and miſcarry, the imputation of his wickedneſs, by your rule, ſhould be impoſed upon the father that ſent him; or, if a ſervant under his maſter's command, tranſporting a ſum of money, be aſſailed by robbers, and die in many irreconciled iniquities, you may call the buſineſs of the maſter the author of the ſervant's damnation. But this is not ſo—The king is not bound to anſwer the particular endings of his ſoldiers, the father of his ſon, nor the maſter of his ſervant; for they purpoſe not their deaths, when they purpoſe their ſervices. Beſides, there is no king, be his cauſe never ſo ſpotleſs, if it come to the arbitrament of ſwords, can try it with all unſpotted ſoldiers. Some, peradventure, have on them the guilt of premeditated and contrived murder; ſome of beguiling virgins with the broken ſeals of perjury; ſome making the wars their bulwark, that have before gored the gentle boſom of peace with pillage and robbery.

robbery. Now, if these men have defeated the law, and out-run native punishment, *though they can out-strip men, they have no wings to fly from God.* War is his beadle, war is his vengeance; so that herein men are punished, for before-breach of the king's law, in the king's quarrel now—Where they feared death, they have borne life away; and where they would be safe, they perish. Then, if they die unprovided, no more is the king guilty of their damnation, than he was before guilty of those impieties for which they are now visited. Every subject's duty is the king's, but every subject's soul is his own. Therefore should every soldier, in the wars, do as every sick man, in his bed, wash every moth out of his conscience; and, dying so, death is to him an advantage; or, not dying, the time was blessedly lost, wherein such preparation was gained; and to him that escapes, it were not sin to think that, making God so free an offer, he let him out-live that day to see his greatness, and to teach others how they should prepare.

Williams. 'Tis certain that every man that dies ill, the ill is upon his own head; the king is not to answer for it.

In the continuation of this Scene, Williams quarrels with the king, still unknown, and they exchange gages with each other, to fight on their next interview. Henry does all this in sport; and I should not have brought it forward to the Reader's view, but that this particular is alluded to, just now, in the Sixteenth Scene of this Act.

SCENE V.

The following beautiful speech is replete with fine reflection, rich language, and poetical imagery. It immediately follows the above dialogue, when the soldiers quit the Scene, and is a meditation naturally arising from the argument there discussed.

Henry *solus.*

Upon the king! let us our lives, our souls,
Our debts, our careful wives, our children, and
Our sins, lay on the king; he must bear all.
O hard condition, the twin-born with greatness,

Subject

Subject to breath of every fool, whose sense
No more can feel, but his own wringing!
What infinite heart-ease must kings neglect,
That private men enjoy! and what have kings,
That private have not too, save ceremony?
Save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?
What kind of God art thou, that suffer'st more
Of mortal griefs, than do thy worshippers?
What are thy rents? What are thy comings in?
O ceremony, shew me but thy worth;
What is thy soul, O adoration?
Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form,
Creating awe and fear in other men?
Wherein thou art less happy, being feared,
Than they in fearing.
What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,
But poisoned flattery? O, be sick, great greatness,
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure.
Think'st thou the fiery fever will go out,
With titles blown from adulation?
Will it give place to flexture and low bending?
Can'st thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,
Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream,
That playest so subtly with a king's repose;
I am a king that find thee; and I know
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The entre-tissued robe of gold and pearl,
The farsed * title running 'fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp,
That beats upon the high shore of this world;
No, not all these thrice-gorgeous ceremonies,
Not all these laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,
Who with a body filled, and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest, crammed with distressful bread.
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell,
But like a lacquay, from the rise to set,
Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night

* *Farsed* signifies *puffed* or *tumid*.

Sleeps

Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn,
Doth rise and help Hyperion † to his horse;
And follows so the ever-running year,
With profitable labour, to his grave.
And, *but for ceremony*, such a wretch,
Winding up days with toil, and nights with sleep,
Hath the fore-hand and vantage of a king.
The slave, a member of the country's peace,
Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots,
What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace,
Whose hours the peasant best advantages.

What is, indeed, the superior state of kings, but greater pomp, anxiety, and danger!

SCENE VI.

Henry made a good prayer here, just before the engagement; in the first part of which is expressed a proper theological sense, in the referring all events to the disposition of Providence; but in the latter end of it, the Popish doctrine of *Commutation*, the making atonement for misdeeds by pious acts, without performing the justice of *Retribution*, is fully set forth.

Henry. O God of battles! steel my soldiers hearts;
Possess them not with fear; take from them now
The sense of reckoning, lest the opposed numbers
Pluck their hearts from them—Not to day, O Lord,
O not to day, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown.
I Richard's body have interred new,
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears,
Than from it issued forced drops of blood.
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
Who twice a day their withered hands hold up
Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built
Two chauntries, where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do;
Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
Since that my penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon.

† The morning star.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

The brisk, presumptuous, and gasconading spirit of the French nation, is well exposed in the following Scene, laid in their camp, just before the action.

The Dauphin, Duke *of* Orleans, Rambures, *&c.*

Orleans. The sun doth gild our armour; up, my lords.

Dauphin. Montez cheval—My horse, valet, lacquay, ha!

Orleans. O brave spirit!

Enter Constable.

Now, my lord Constable?

Const. Hark, how our steeds for present service neigh!

Dauphin. Mount them, and make incision in their sides,
That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,
And daunt them with superfluous courage. Ha!

Rambures. What, will you have them weep our horses' blood?
How shall we, then, behold their natural tears?

Enter a Messenger.

Mes. The English are embattled, you French peers.

Const. To horse! ye gallant princes, strait to horse!
Do but behold yon poor and starved band,
And your fair shew shall suck away their souls,
Leaving them but the shales * and husks of men.
There is not work enough for all our hands,
Scarce blood enough in all their sickly veins,
To give each naked curtle-ax a stain,
That our French gallants shall to-day draw out,
And sheath for lack of sport. Let's but blow on them,
The vapour of our valour will o'erturn them;
'Tis positive 'gainst all exception, lords,
That our superfluous lacqueys and our peasants,
Who in unnecessary action swarm
About our squares of battle, were enow
To purge this field of such a hilding † foe;

* *Shale*, corrupt English for *shell.*
† *Hilding*, *mean* or *contemptible.*

Though

Though we upon this mountain's basis by,
Took stand for idle contemplation;
But that our honours must not. What's to say?
A very little, little, let us do,
And all is done. Then let the trumpet sound
The *tucket-sonance*, and the note to mount;
For our approach shall so much *dare the field*,
That England shall *couch down* in fear, and yield *.

Enter Grandpree.

Grand. Why do ye stay so long, my lords of France?
Yon island carrions, desperate of their bones,
Ill-favouredly become the morning field;
Their ragged curtains poorly are let loose,
And our air shakes them passing scornfully.
Big Mars seems bankrupt in their beggared host,
And faintly through a rusty bever peeps;
The horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,
With torch-staves in their hands; and their poor jades
Lob down their heads, dropping the hide and hips;
The gum down-roping from their pale dead eyes;
And in their pale dull mouths the gimmal-bit †
Lies foul with chewed grass, still and motionless;
And their executors, the knavish crows,
Fly o'er them, all impatient for their hour.
Description cannot suit itself in words,
To demonstrate the life of such a battle,
In life so liveless as it shews itself.

Const. They've said their prayers, and they wait for death.

Dauph. Shall we go send them dinners and fresh suits,
And give their fasting horses provender,
And after fight them?

Grandpree's description, given here, of a fatigued, dispirited, and weather-beaten host is most masterly drawn, in the true picturesque stile, in the above passage; and if the French had fought,

* The words marked in Italics, in these three last lines, are borrowed from the sporting phrase, particularly falconry, to express a scorn of the English forces.

† A curb bridle.

on that memorable day, but as well as Shakeſpeare has made them ſpeak upon the occaſion, England might not, perhaps, have numbered France among the titles of its crown.

SCENE VIII.

The gallant ſpirit of a ſoldier is nobly ſet forth in this ſcene, which were it founded merely in the imagination of the poet, would not be ſo material to be remarked upon; but being grounded on hiſtoric fact, ought to be taken notice of for the honour of our Engliſh heroe.

Henry *and* Weſtmorland.

Weſtm. O that we now had here
But one ten thouſand of thoſe men in England,
That do no work to-day *!
King. What's he that wiſhes ſo?
My couſin Weſtmorland? No, my fair couſin,
If we are marked to die, we are enow
To do our country loſs; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater ſhare of honour.
God's will! I pray thee wiſh not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous of gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my coſt;
It yerns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my deſires;
But if it be a ſin to covet honour,
I am the moſt offending ſoul alive.
No, 'faith, my lord, wiſh not a man from England—
God's peace! I would not loſe ſo great an honour,
As one man more, methinks, would ſhare from me,
For the beſt hopes I have. Don't wiſh one more;
Rather proclaim it, Weſtmorland, through my hoſt,
That he who hath no ſtomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his paſſport ſhall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purſe.
We would not die in that man's company,
That fears his fellowſhip to die with us.

* The battle of Agincourt was fought on St. Criſpian's day, a great feſtival then obſerved in England.

This

This day is called the feaſt of Criſpian—
He that outlives this day, and comes ſafe home,
Will ſtand a tip-toe when this day is named,
And rouſe him at the name of Criſpian.
He that ſhall live this day, and ſee old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feaſt his neighbours,
And ſay, To-morrow is Saint Criſpian;
Then will he ſtrip his ſleeve, and ſhew his ſcars.
Old men forget, yet ſhall not all forget,
But they'll remember with advantages*,
What feats they did that day. Then ſhall our names,
Familiar in their mouths as houſhold words,
Harry the king, Bedford, and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Saliſbury and Glo'ſter †,
Be in their flowing cups freſhly remembered.
This ſtory ſhall the good man teach his ſon,
And Criſpin Criſpian ſhall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it ſhall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he, to-day, that ſheds his blood with me,
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er ſo vile,
This day ſhall gentle his condition.
And gentlemen in England, now a-bed,
Shall think themſelves accurſed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap while any ſpeaks,
That fought with us upon ſaint Criſpian's day.

The latter part of this ſpeech, though ſomewhat too declamatory, contains many of thoſe reflections and conſiderations, which uſed, *formerly*, to inſpire our troops with courage, while that virtuous and noble ſpirit was yet retained among our brave anceſtors, which led them to reſpect what their country or poſterity might think or ſay of them.

* With *advantages*. Magnifying their own proweſs.

† Shakeſpeare ſeems to have made the king purpoſely leave the name of Weſtmorland out of this illuſtrious roll, from a pique at his having wiſhed for additional forces, or more probably to preſerve the chaſtity of hiſtoric enumeration; as he had not diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the action.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

The tenor of Henry's character is ſtill finely preſerved, in the following paſſage; which, as his cauſe was juſt, and that his magnanimity and reſolution ſo happily bore him through the infinite odds of oppoſition, deſerves well to be obſerved upon.

When the two armies are juſt on the point of joining battle, the French Herald comes again to the Engliſh camp, repeating the ſame challenge as before from the Conſtable, requiring to know what terms the king would propoſe for his ranſom; as ſuppoſing him already a captive.

Henry. I pray thee, bear my former anſwer back.
Bid them achieve me, and then ſell my bones.
Good God! why ſhould they mock poor fellows thus?
The man that once did ſell the lion's ſkin,
While the beaſt lived, was killed with hunting him.
And many of our bodies ſhall, no doubt,
Find native graves; upon the which I truſt,
Shall witneſs live, in braſs, of this day's work.
Let me ſpeak proudly; tell the Conſtable,
We are but warriors for the working day *;
Our gayneſs, and our gilt, are all beſmirched
With rainy marching in the painful field.
There's not a piece of feather † in our hoſt—
Good argument, I hope, we will not fly;
And time hath worn us into ſlovenry.
But by the maſs, our hearts are in the trim;
And my poor ſoldiers tell me, yet ere night
They'll be in freſher robes, or they will pluck
The gay new coats o'er the French ſoldiers heads,
And turn them out of ſervice. If they do,
As, if God pleaſe, they ſhall, my ranſom then
Will ſoon be levied—Herald, ſave thy labour;
Come thou no more for ranſom, gentle Herald:
They ſhall have none, I ſwear, but theſe my joints;

* We have no holiday change of apparel to put on. *We are men about our buſineſs.*

† A ſoldier's plume.

Which

Which if they have as I will leave 'em them,
Shall yield them little—Tell the Conſtable.

SCENE XII.

Here follows a noble example of bravery, friendſhip, loyalty, and compoſure of mind—in fine, of every manly excellence and virtue, moſt beautifully deſcribed in the recital of one ſhort and ſingle action on the field of battle.

Henry *and* Exeter.

Henry. Well have we done, thrice valiant countrymen.
But all's not done, the French yet keep the field.
Ex. The Duke of York commends him to your majeſty,
Henry. Lives he, good uncle? Thrice within this hour
I ſaw him down, thrice up again, and fighting,
From helmet to the ſpur all bleeding o'er.
Exeter. In which array, brave ſoldier, doth he lie,
Larding the plain; and by his bloody ſide,
Yoke-fellow to his honour-owing wounds,
The noble earl of Suffolk alſo lies.
Suffolk firſt died, and York all haggled over,
Comes to him where in gore he lay inſteeped,
And takes him by the beard, kiſſes the gaſhes
That bloodily did yawn upon his face,
And cries aloud, "Tarry, my couſin Suffolk,
"My ſoul ſhall thine keep company to heaven—
"Tarry, ſweet ſoul, for mine, then fly a-breaſt;
"As in this glorious and well-foughten field
"We kept together in our chivalry."
Upon theſe words I came, and cheared him up;
He ſmiled me in the face, gave me his hand,
And with a feeble gripe, ſays, "Dear my lord,
"Commend my ſervice to my ſovereign."
So did he turn, and over Suffolk's neck
He threw his wounded arm, and kiſſed his lips,
And ſo eſpouſed to death, with blood he ſealed
A teſtament of noble ending love.
The pretty and ſweet manner of it, forced
Thoſe waters from me, which I would have ſtopped;
But I had not ſo much of man in me,

But all my mother came into my eyes,
And gave me up to tears.
Henry. I blame you not;
For hearing this, I muſt perforce compound
With miſtful eyes, or they will iſſue too— [*An Alarm.*
But hark, what new alarum is this ſame?

The Poet has moſt judiciouſly interrupted Henry's ſpeech, in this critical place. It would have been expected from him to have ſaid ſomething more, upon ſo intereſting an occaſion; and yet it would have been impoſſible to have carried either ſentiment or expreſſion higher than Exeter has juſt done, on the ſame ſubject. Shakeſpeare has herein imitated the addreſs of Timanthes, who, in his picture of the ſacrifice of Iphigenia, covers her father's head with a veil.

SCENE XIV.

Henry. I was not angry ſince I came to France,
Until this inſtant. Take a trumpet, Herald,
Ride thou unto the horſemen on yon hill;
If they will fight with us, bid them come down,
Or void the field; they do offend our ſight;
If they'll do neither, we will come to them,
And make them ſker away, as ſwift as ſtones
Enforced from the old Aſſyrian ſlings.

The firſt ſentence, in the above ſpeech, is one among the many inſtances in which Shakeſpeare has manifeſted his thorough knowledge in human nature. Henry acts with an heroic reſolution during the whole of this perilous conflict, and replies with a daring and careleſs ſpirit to all the inſolence and contempt of a powerful enemy; but he expreſſes no rage, nor betrays the leaſt manner of reſentment, throughout. The dangers and difficulties of his ſituation required the utmoſt command and preſervation of his temper. Diſtreſs and affliction are

are ſovereign ſpecifics for the pride and fierceneſs of man's nature. But theſe reſtraints being now removed, by his victory, he begins to yield the rein a little to paſſion, upon ſeeing the obſtinacy of the enemy ſtill continuing after their defeat.

SCENE XVI.

Here the paſſage hinted above, from the latter part of the Fourth Scene in this Act, comes to be cleared up, when the ſoldier knows that the unknown perſon he had engaged to fight with was his king. Upon this occaſion he makes an apology for himſelf, which may have its uſe in being extended to a general reflection, applicable to all the ſuperior ranks of life; That thoſe who demean themſelves below their character or dignity, can have no right to challenge that reſpect from the world, which they might otherwiſe be intitled to.

Henry *and the* Soldier.

Henry. How canſt thou make me ſatisfaction?

Soldier. All offences, my lord, come from the heart; never came any from mine, that might offend your majeſty.

Henry. It was ourſelf thou didſt abuſe.

Soldier. Your majeſty came not like yourſelf; you appeared to me but as a common man; witneſs the night, your garments, your lowlineſs; and what your highneſs ſuffered under that ſhape, I beſeech you take it for your fault, and not mine; for had you been as I took you for, I made no offence; therefore, I beſeech your highneſs, pardon me.

SCENE XVII.

Henry preſerves the ſame ſpirit of piety after his victory, as he had expreſſed juſt before the action, in Scene the Sixth of this Act; in imputing his ſucceſs to the arm and protection of Omnipotence alone.

Henry, Exeter, *and* Fluellin.

Henry. O God! thy arm was here!
And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
Ascribe we all. When without stratagem,
But in plain shock and even play of battle,
Was ever known so great, and little loss,
On one part, and on t'other? Take it, God,
For it is only thine.

Exeter. 'Tis wonderful!

Henry. Come, go we in procession to the village;
And be it death proclaimed through our host,
To boast of this or take that praise from God,
Which is his only.

Fluellin. Is it not lawful, an please your majesty, to tell how many are killed?

Henry. Yes, captain, but with this acknowledgment,
That God fought for us.

ACT V. SCENE III.

In this Scene, a congress is held between the English and French, which is opened by the duke of Burgundy, with a declamatory representation of a country during a state of war, which moves me more even than the description of a battle would do. The barbarous scene here set forth, is more general and permanent.—The latter passage, which mentions the condition of uneducated youth, is by much the most affecting part of the picture. The former damage, by labour, money, and a good harvest, may be repaired; but neither industry, mines, nor less than an age, can retrieve the other loss.

Burgundy. Since then my office hath so far prevailed,
That face to face, and royal eye to eye,
You have congreeted, let it not disgrace me,
If I demand before this royal view,
What rub, or what impediment there is,

Why

Why that the naked, poor, and mangled peace,
Dear nurse of arts, plenties, and joyful births,
Should not, in this best garden of the world,
Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage?
Alas! she hath from France too long been chased;
And all her husbandry doth lie on heaps,
Corrupting in its own fertility.
Her vine, the merry chearer of the heart,
Unpruned dies; her hedges even pleached,
Like prisoners wildly over-grown with hair,
Put forth disordered twigs; her fallow leas *,
The darnel, hemlock, and rank fumitory,
Doth root upon, while that the coulter rusts,
That should deracinate such savagery;
The even mead, that erst brought sweetly forth
The freckled cowslip, burnet, and green clover,
Wanting the scythe, all uncorrected, rank,
Conceives by idleness; and nothing teems,
But hateful docks, rough thistles, keckses, burs,
Losing both beauty and utility;
And all our vineyards, fallows, meads, and hedges,
Defective in their natures, grow to wildness.
Even so our houses, and ourselves, our children,
Have lost, or do not learn, for want of time,
The sciences that should become our country;
But grow like savages, as soldiers will,
That nothing do but meditate on blood,
To swearing and stern looks, diffused † attire,
And every thing that seems unnatural.

* * *

When a council is selected to retire apart, and confer upon the preliminaries of peace, the queen of France, who is present at the treaty, is asked by Henry, whether she chuses to go with the plenipotentiaries, or would stay where she is?

Isabel. Our gracious brother, I will go with them;
Haply a woman's voice may do some good,
When articles too nicely urged be stood on.

* *Leas*, inclosed grounds. † *Diffused* for *slovenly*.

What Isabel says upon this occasion is very true. Men may be sometimes too sturdy with one another, even in matters of mere punctilio, or of trifling concern; each too proud or obstinate to recede; when the interposition of a woman may remove the difficulty, or compose the ferment, without either of the parties appearing to give up to the other.

The interfering of a woman, in disputes between men, is seldom an indifferent matter. It generally renders them either more gentle, or more refractory.

SCENE IV.

Shakespeare appears to be so fond of the personage of Henry, that though he has already raised him to the highest pitch in our admiration and esteem, he continues to recommend him to us still further, by introducing him in a new character and situation, that of a lover and a courtier. He did the same for Falstaff before, in the Merry Wives of Windsor, at the request of Queen Elizabeth; but here he enters a volunteer in the service. Had any other writer ventured on such an attempt, he would have rendered him quite a different man from himself, as Racine has *misrepresented* Achilles; but Henry continues to be the same person still, only appearing in new circumstances; the same humour, playful spirit, and careless ease, remain in his courtship, as may be seen in his rallying of Falstaff, replying to Montjoy, or exchanging gages with the soldier.

It is necessary to transcribe the intire dialogue between him and his mistress, to support my observation, as well as for the entertainment of my Reader.

Henry,

Henry, Catharine, *and a* French Lady.

Henry. Fair Catharine, moſt fair,
Will you vouchſafe to teach a ſoldier terms,
Such as will enter at a lady's ear,
And plead his love-ſuit to her gentle heart?

Cath. Your majeſty ſhall mock at me, I cannot ſpeak your England.

Henry. O, fair Catharine, if you will love me ſoundly with your French heart, I will be glad to hear you confeſs it brokenly with your Engliſh tongue. Do you like me, Kate?

Cath. *Pardonnez moi*. I cannot tell what is *like me*.

Henry. An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.

Cath. *Que dit il, que je ſuis ſemblable à les anges?*

Lady. *Oui, vrayment, ſauve votre grace, ainſi dit il.*

Henry. I ſaid ſo, dear Catharine, and I muſt not bluſh to affirm it.

Cath. *O, bon Dieu, les langues des hommes ſont pleines des tromperies.*

Henry. What ſays ſhe, fair one? that tongues of men are full of deceit?

Lady. *Ouy*, dat de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits. Dat is de princeſs.

Henry. The princeſs is the better Engliſh woman. I'faith, Kate, my wooing is fit for thy underſtanding; I am glad thou can'ſt ſpeak no better Engliſh; for, if thou could'ſt, thou would'ſt find me ſuch a plain king, that thou would'ſt think I had ſold my farm to buy a crown. I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to ſay, *I love you*; then, if you urge further than to ſay, *do you, in faith?* I wear out my ſuit. Give me your anſwer; i'faith do; and ſo clap hands, and a bargain. How ſay you, lady?

Cath. *Sauf votre honneur*, me underſtand well.

Henry. Marry, if you put me to verſes, or to dance for your ſake, Kate, why you undid me; for the one I have neither words, nor meaſure; and for the other, I have as little addreſs. If I could win a lady at leap-

frog, or by *volting* * into my saddle, with my armour on my back, under the correction of bragging be it spoken, I should quickly leap into matrimony. Or if I might buffet for my love, or bound my horse for her favours, I could lay on like a butcher, and sit like a jack-a-napes †, never off. But, before God, Kate, I cannot look greenly, nor grasp out my eloquence, nor have I cunning in protestation; only downright oaths, which I never use, till urged, and never break, for urging ‡. If thou can'st love a fellow of this temper, Kate, whose face is not worth sun-burning, that never looks in his glass for love of any thing he sees there, let thine eye be thy cook. I speak plain soldier; if thou can'st love me for this, take me; if not, to say to thee that I shall die, 'tis true; but for thy love, by the Lord, no; yet I love thee too. And while thou liveſt, Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined § constancy, for he perforce must do thee right, because he hath not the gift to woo in other places; for those fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies favours, they do always reason themselves out again ‖. What? a speaker is but a prater; a rhyme is but a ballad; a good leg will fall, a straight back will stoop, a black beard will turn white, a curled pate will grow bald, a fair face will wither, a full eye will wax hollow; but a

* *Volting*, for *vaulting*. I have taken the liberty of spelling the word so, to distinguish it from the builder's term, according to the observation I have made on it in another place. *To volt* comes from *voltiger*, *to fly*; and it is not pedantry to stick closely to an etymology, when a deviation from it confounds the sense. See Series of Letters, vol. vi. page 45.

† A monkey.

‡ This passage was so clear to all the Commentators, I suppose, that they have not given any note upon it; but I think it needs explanation. The sense of it I take to be this: I never swear, except when urged by passion; but the oath once taken, I never urge the rashness of it as an excuse for its breach.

§ By this epithet, the poet means to compare sincerity to *bullion-gold*, before it is alloyed for *coinage*. The editors differ about the word, but Shakespeare explains it in this sense, before he finishes the sentence—*because he hath not the gift to woo in other places*—or gold is not so current as when turned into *specie*.

‖ *Reason themselves out again.* The finding success so easy, tempts them to pursue more conquests, forsaking their former.

good

good heart, Kate, is the ſun and the moon; or rather the ſun, and not the moon; for it ſhines bright, and never changes, but keeps his courſe truly. If thou would'ſt have ſuch a one, take me; take a ſoldier; take a king. And what ſay'ſt thou then to my love? Speak, my fair, and fairly, I pray thee.

Cath. Is it poſſible dat I ſhould love de enemy of France?

Henry. No, it is not poſſible that you ſhould love the enemy of France, Kate; but in loving me you ſhould love the friend of France; for I love France ſo well, that I will not part with a village of it; and, Kate, when France is mine, and I am yours, then yours is France, and you are mine.

Cath. I cannot tell vat is dat.

Henry. No, Kate? I will tell thee in French, which I am ſure will hang upon my tongue, like a bride about her huſband's neck, hardly to be ſhook off—*Quand j'ay le* poſſeſſion de France, & quand vous avez le poſſeſſion de moi*—Let me ſee—What then? St. Dennis be my ſpeed!—*Donc votre eſt France, & vous etes mienne.* It is as eaſy for me, Kate, to conquer the kingdom, as to ſpeak ſo much more French. I ſhall never move thee in French, unleſs it be to laugh at me.

Cath. Sauf votre honneur, le Francois que vous parlez eſt meilleur que l'Anglois lequel je parle.

Henry. No, faith, it's not, Kate; but thy ſpeaking of my tongue, and I thine, moſt truly falſely, muſt needs be granted to be much at one. But, Kate, doſt thou underſtand ſo much Engliſh? Canſt thou love me?

Cath. I cannot tell.

Henry. Can any of your neighbours tell, Kate? I'll aſk them. Come, I know thou loveſt me; and at night when you come into your cloſet, you'll queſtion this gentlewoman about me; and I know, Kate, you will to her diſpraiſe thoſe parts in me, that you like beſt; but, good Kate, mock me mercifully; the rather, gentle Princeſs, becauſe I love thee cruelly. If ever thou beeſt mine, Kate, as I have ſaving faith within me tells me

* *Le*, for *la*. Henry is made to ſpeak falſe French, throughout, to humour Kate's falſe Engliſh.

thou ſhalt, I get thee with *ſcambling* †, and thou muſt, therefore, needs prove a good ſoldier-breeder—Shall not thou and I, between St. Dennis and St. George, compound a boy half French, half Engliſh, that ſhall go to Conſtantinople, and take the Turk by the beard? Shall we not? What ſay'ſt thou, my fair *Flower-de-Luce?*

Cath. I do not know dat.

Henry. No, 'tis hereafter to know, but now to promiſe. Do but now promiſe, Kate, you will endeavour for your *French* part of ſuch a boy; and, for my *Engliſh* moiety, take the word of a king and a bachelor. How anſwer you, le *plus belle Catharine du monde, mon tres chere & divine deeſſe?*

Cath. Your majeſtee ave fauſe French enough to deceive de moſt ſage damoiſel ‡ dat is *en France.*

Henry. Now, fy upon my falſe French; by mine honour, in true Engliſh, I love thee, Kate; by which honour I dare not ſwear thou loveſt me; yet my blood begins to flatter me that thou doſt, notwithſtanding the poor and untempting effect of my viſage. Now, beſhrew my father's ambition, he was thinking of civil wars when he got me; therefore was I created with a ſtubborn outſide, with an aſpect of iron, that when I come to woo ladies, I fright them; but in faith, Kate, the elder I wax, the better I ſhall appear. My comfort is, that old age, that ill layer-up of beauty, can do no more ſpoil upon my face. Thou haſt me, if thou haſt me, at the worſt; and thou ſhalt wear me, if thou wear me, better and better; and therefore, tell me, fair Catharine, will you have me? Put off your maiden bluſhes, avouch the thoughts of your heart, with the looks of an empreſs; take me by the hand, and ſay, Harry of England, I am thine; which word thou ſhalt no ſooner bleſs mine ear withal, but I will tell thee aloud, England is thine, Ireland is thine, France is thine, and Henry Plantagenet is thine; who, though

† *Scambling*, riotouſly — Alluding to the war which was the prelude to his courtſhip.

‡ I have ſpelt the word as I found it in the Text.

I ſpeak

I ſpeak it before his face, if he be not fellow with the beſt king, thou ſhalt find the beſt king of good fellows. Come, your anſwer in broken muſic; for thy voice is muſic, and thy Engliſh broken—Therefore, queen of all, Catharine, break thy mind to me in broken Engliſh, wilt thou have me?

Cath. Dat is as it ſhall pleaſe *le roy mon pere.*

Henry. Nay, it will pleaſe him well, Kate—It ſhall pleaſe him, Kate.

Cath. Den it ſhall alſo content me.

Henry. Upon that I kiſs your hand, and call you my queen.

Cath. Laiſſez, mon Seigneur, laiſſez, laiſſez—Ma foy, je ne veux point que vous abaiſſiez voſtre grandeur, en baiſant le main de votre indigne ſerviteure *; *excuſez moi, je vous ſupplie, mon tres puiſſant Seigneur.*

Henry. Then I will kiſs your lips, Kate.

Cath. Les dames & demoiſelles ne faut pas etre baiſees devant leur nopçes — Il n'eſt pas la coûtume de France.

Henry. Madam my interpreter, what ſays ſhe?

Lady. Dat is not be de faſhon *pour les* ladies of *France*—I cannot tell what is *baiſer, en Engliſh.*

Henry. To kiſs, *Mademoiſelle.*

Lady. Your majeſty *entendre* better *que moy.*

Henry. 'Tis not a faſhion for the maids of France to kiſs, before they are married, would ſhe ſay?

Lady. Ouy, vrayement.

Henry. O, Kate, nice cuſtoms curtſie to great folks. Dear Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak liſt of a country's faſhion—We are the makers of manners, Kate; and the liberty † that follows our places, ſtops the mouth of all find-faults; as I will do yours for the upholding the nice faſhion of your country, in denying me a kiſs—Therefore—patiently, and yielding — [*Kiſſing her.*] You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate; there is more eloquence in a touch of them, than in all the tongues of the French council;

* There is no ſuch modern French word, in the feminine gender.

† The privileges, or authority of ſuperior rank.

and

and they would ſooner perſwade Harry of England, than a general petition of monarchs. Here comes your father.

In the laſt paſſage of the foregoing dialogue, Henry affords a good ſubject for reflection, where he ſpeaks of the powerful influence of kings over the manners of a people. The maxim appears to be plauſible, but is not true in every reſpect. *Rank and example* alone, will not be ſufficient for this effect, unſupported by *dignity and precept*. It is not enough for a prince to act well himſelf, and intend well to morals—He muſt form a purpoſe for their ſupport, and be active in his general, as well as private, capacity. A ſovereign, indeed, has it in his power, whenever it is in his will, moſt effectually to encourage virtue, and diſcourage vice, if he chuſes to make this object the rule of his polity. This would be the ſureſt and ſafeſt method of rendering himſelf abſolute; for as poor Cardinal Wolſey ſays—upon a maxim too late diſcovered—

"Corruption wins not more than honeſty."

Religion itſelf has judged it neceſſary to hold out diſtant rewards and puniſhments, to allure and deter mankind, and kings can only have a right to be ſtiled the vice-gerents of Heaven, when they render theſe ſanctions more immediate. A king is ſaid to have long hands; but they are of no uſe except to wrap himſelf up, *while he keeps them folded*.

Lewis the Fourteenth happily brought ſuch a *golden age* to bear, toward the latter part of his illuſtrious reign, if we may give credit to what St. Evremond ſays, in a letter of his to Ninon de l'Enclos.

"You live in a country where people have extraordinary advantages towards ſaving their ſouls.

"There,

" There, vice is almoſt as much againſt the faſhi-
" on, as againſt virtue. Sinning paſſes for ill-
" breeding; ſhocks decency, and offends good
" manners, as much as religion. Formerly, it
" ſufficed to be wicked; but, at preſent, one muſt
" be a ſcoundrel, to be damned, in France. They
" who have not regard enough for another life,
" are led to ſalvation by the conſideration and du-
" ties of this."

In order to leave the impreſſion of this moſt intereſting and moral reflection more ſtrongly on the minds of the great, the powerful, and the opulent, I ſhall here conclude my obſervations on this Piece, ſo fruitful of example and document, throughout.

HENRY the SIXTH.

FIRST PART.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

HENRY THE SIXTH.
DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, Protector, and Uncle to the King.
BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, Cardinal, and Great Uncle to the King.
RICHARD PLANTAGENET, afterwards Duke of York.
DUKE OF SOMERSET.
DUKE OF ALANSON, A French Peer.
MORTIMER, Earl of March.
EARL OF WARWICK.
EARL OF SUFFOLK.
LORD TALBOT.

WOMEN.

None are brought upon the Scene, throughout the few remarks I have had any opportunity of making on this Play.

HENRY the SIXTH.

FIRST PART.

ACT I. SCENE I.

WINCHESTER, ſpeaking of the death of Henry the Fifth :

He was a king, bleſt of the King of Kings.
Unto the French the dreadful judgment day
So dreadful will not be, as was his ſight ;
The battles of the Lord of Hoſts he fought—
The Church's prayers made him ſo proſperous.

We may remember in the former Play, that Henry the Fifth, like a true Chriſtian heroe, imputes all his ſucceſſes immediately to Heaven ; but the good Biſhop, I am ſorry to ſay it, like a true prieſt, *of thoſe days*, here interpoſes between them, and attributes his proſperity ſolely to the mediation of the Church.

SCENE V.

There is a good deſcription given of the common Engliſh, in the following ſpeech :

Alanſon. They want their porridge, and their fat bullbeeves ;
Either they muſt be dieted, like mules,
And have their provender tied to their mouths,
Or piteous they will look, like drowned mice.

A true phyſical knowledge is here expreſſed. A great part of perſonal courage depends upon the animal ſpirits ; and to keep men ſtout, you muſt keep them ſtrong. If philoſophy ſhould be ſo difficult

ficult as to deny that good feeding can render a soldiery more brave, it must admit, however, that it will render it more serviceable, at least; which is all that we mean to contend for here.

ACT II. SCENE V.

The partiality which we are all apt to manifest towards our own interests, is well noted in this place. This principle is so powerful in human nature, that it not only engages our affections, but warps our judgments also; so that it often imposes on our reason, and frequently makes us continue obstinate, more from error than selfishness. Our opinions differ, even in matters of no concernment to us; and how much less is it to be expected, that we should be of accord, when we are become a party in the question ourselves?

Somerset and Plantagenet being engaged in a warm dispute, appeal to the umpirage of a third indifferent person, with all the seeming candor imaginable.

Somerset. Judge you, my lord of Warwick, then, between us.

Warw. Between two hawks, which flies the higher pitch,
Between two dogs, which hath the deeper mouth,
Between two blades, which bears the better temper,
Between two horses, which doth bear him best,
Between two girls, which hath the merriest eye,
I have, perhaps, some shallow spirit of judgment;
But in these nice sharp quillets of the law,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw.

Plant. Tut, tut, here is a mannerly forbearance.
The truth appears so naked, on my side,
That any purblind eye may find it out.

Somer. And on my side, it is so well apparelled,
So clear, so shining, and so evident,
That it will glimmer through a blind man's eye.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

There is ſomething extremely moving, in the firſt part of this Scene, which ſhews a priſon from whence old Earl Mortimer is brought forth in a chair, before the gates, attended by his gaolers. He had been unfortunately declared heir to the Crown, by Richard the Second, and was therefore kept a priſoner of State, during the reigns of Henrys the Fourth and Fifth, and continued ſtill in confinement, under the preſent king alſo.

We are naturally more affected at the diſtreſſes of age, infancy, or women, than with what we ſee ſuffered by the adult or robuſt unfortunate. Our compaſſion riſes in proportion to the weakneſs of the Victim, as we become ſenſible of the inability of reſiſtance, along with the weight of the oppreſſion.

The earneſt deſire which the unhappy old man expreſſes here, for the relief of death, is very natural to a perſon in his circumſtances; and can by no means be deemed reprehenſible, in ſuch a ſituation, when the completion of the wiſh is not forwarded by any act of violence or impatience in the ſufferer.

Mort. Kind keepers of my weak decaying age,
Let dying Mortimer here reſt himſelf—
Even like a wretch new haled from the rack,
So fare my limbs with long impriſonment;
And theſe grey locks, the *purſuivants of death*,
Neſtor-like aged in an age of care,
Argue the end of hapleſs Mortimer.
Theſe eyes, like lamps whoſe waſting oil is ſpent,
Wax dim, as drawing to their exigent *.
Weak ſhoulders over-born with burdening grief,
And pithleſs arms like to a withered vine,

* *Exigent—End.* We meet with the word no where, in this ſenſe, but here.

That

That drops his ſapleſs branches to the ground.
Yet are theſe feet, whoſe ſtrengthleſs ſtay is numb,
Unable to ſupport this lump of clay,
Swift-winged with deſire to get a grave;
As witting I no other comfort have.

The firſt expreſſion above, of *kind keepers*, is moſt tenderly affecting—A noble and gallant mind is here repreſented as being ſo ſubdued by the hardneſs of its condition, as to be ſo reduced to the mortifying neceſſity of ſoothing and temporizing with the vile miniſters of cruelty and oppreſſion! A ſad object this, indeed!

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Here is given a deſcription of the qualifications which had entitled the firſt Knights of the Garter to that honourable mark of diſtinction, upon the original inſtitution of the Order; a reſpect to which has been ever ſince ſo *minutely* attended to, that *the ſame dreſſes, badges, and vows of chivalry*, have been ſtill preſerved free from all violation. The character likewiſe, we are ſurely to ſuppoſe, has been as critically regarded.

Talbot, to the King and Princes, upon an arraignment of *Sir John Faſtolfe* *, Knight of the Garter, for cowardice:

When firſt this Order was ordained, my lords,
Knights of the Garter were of noble birth;
Valiant and virtuous, full of haughty courage;
Such as were grown to credit by the wars;
Not fearing death, nor ſhrinking for diſtreſs,
But always reſolute in moſt extremes.
He then that is not furniſhed in this ſort,
Doth but uſurp the ſacred name of Knight,
Prophaning this moſt honourable Order;

* This is not our quondam merry Knight, though the near reſemblance of the names, and puſillanimity of the characters, might poſſibly render the perſon equivocal to the reader.

And

And ſhould, if I were worthy to be judge,
Be quite degraded, like a hedge-born ſwain,
That doth preſume to boaſt of gentle blood.

ACT V. SCENE II.

The following reflection has too often been made, both before and ſince the æra here pointed out. It is ſhocking to humanity, as well as to religion, to think that there ſhould ever have been, and ſhould ſtill continue, ſuch frequent occaſions to repeat it.

King. I always thought,
It was both impious, and unnatural,
That ſuch immanity and bloody ſtrife
Should reign among profeſſors of one faith.

In the ſame Scene, when the king is urged to think of marrying, he very properly objects to the propoſal, both on account of his youth, and the neceſſity of applying his mind to the ſtudies becoming his rank and ſituation.

King. Marriage? alas! my years are yet too young;
And fitter is my ſtudy and my books,
Than wanton dalliance with a paramour.

Such conſiderations, it ſeems, were regarded in thoſe days, and in the time of our Author likewiſe, or he would not have commented on the ſubject. Are we grown wiſer?

SCENE VIII.

This ſame topick of matrimony is fully diſcuſſed, and in a more general and liberal manner, in the preſent Scene, upon Exeter's objecting to the match propoſed, on account of the Princeſs mentioned not being ſufficiently endowed with fortune.

Suf. A dower, my lords! Diſgrace not ſo your king,
That he ſhould be ſo abject, baſe, and poor,
To chuſe for wealth, and not for perfect love.

Henry

Henry is able to enrich his queen,
And need not ſeek a queen to make him rich.
So worthleſs peaſants bargain for their wives,
As market-men for oxen, ſheep, or horſe.
But marriage is a matter of more worth,
Than to be dealt in by attorney-ſhip
Not whom we will, but whom his grace affects,
Muſt be companion of his nuptial bed.
And therefore, lords, ſince he affects her moſt,
It moſt of all theſe reaſons bindeth us,
In our opinions ſhe ſhould be preferred;
For what is wedlock forced, but a hell,
An age of diſcord and continual ſtrife?
Whereas the contrary bringeth forth bliſs,
And is a pattern of celeſtial peace.

Theſe arguments are certainly concluſive, in private life; and if *reaſons of ſtate* may be allowed to ſtand againſt them, in the ſupremeſt rank, I ſhall only conclude my remarks on this Piece, with a line of an old ſong, in favour of our natural and chartered liberties,

"If ſo happy's *a miller*, then who'd be *a king!*"

HENRY the SIXTH.

SECOND PART.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

HENRY the Sixth.
DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, Uncle to the King.
CARDINAL BEAUFORT, Bishop of Winchester, Great Uncle to the King.
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.
DUKE OF SOMERSET.
EARL OF SALISBURY.
EARL OF WARWICK.

WOMEN.

None appear in any of the Scenes here noted.

HENRY the SIXTH.

SECOND PART.

ACT II. SCENE I.

THE King and Gloucester returned from hawking:

King. But what a point, my lord, your faulcon made,
And what a pitch she flew above the rest—
To see how God in all his creatures works!
Yea man and birds are fain of climbing high.

Here the king has made a philosophical reflection on the aspiring but commendable nature of man which is improved with a religious sense in the reply:

Glou. My lord, 'tis but a base ignoble mind,
That mounts no higher than a bird can soar *.

SCENE III.

When a charge has been exhibited against the duchess of Gloucester, for treason and sorcery, the Cardinal, a declared enemy to the duke her husband, takes occasion to insult him upon this misfortune; to which he thus answers:

* This passage seems to be an imitation of a Latin sentence I have somewhere met with, and venture to quote from memory only—*Spes aquilas supervolat*; Hope soars beyond an eagle's flight. I do not mean to adduce this instance, in order to support an opinion of Shakespeare's learning; but merely to shew that good wits may sometimes *fly*, as well as *jump* together. The severest critic may surely pardon a play on words, in a comment upon so sportive an author. It would be an invidious reflection on our poet's fame, to suppose him to have been a scholar. A genius *lends* thoughts, a scholar but *borrows* them.

Glou. Ambitious churchman! leave to afflict my heart!
Sorrow and grief have vanquiſhed all my powers;
And, vanquiſhed as I am, I yield to thee,
Or to the meaneſt groom.

The above is one of Shakeſpear's juſt delineations of human nature. That ſpirit which could not be ſubdued by any perſonal difficulty or danger, becomes ſuddenly abated, on the mortification ariſing from the ſhame and vice of one ſo nearly and dearly allied to him.

I have been much obliged, throughout this Work, to the Commentators, for not having noted many ſuch paſſages as this. They have rarely touched upon our Author's anatomy of human nature, contenting themſelves, like ſculptors, or painters, with only marking its outward form, its colours and proportions; the veins, arteries, and finer capillaries of the inward man, remaining often undiſſected.

SCENE VII.

Here the good duke, upon the occaſion of his wife's ignominy and penance, makes a reflection on the general nature of human life, which he illuſtrates with an apt alluſion:

Glou. Thus ſometimes hath the brighteſt day a cloud;
And after ſummer evermore ſucceeds
The barren winter, with his nipping cold;
So cares and joys abound, as ſeaſons fleet.

Juſt after this, he ſpeaks of the unhappy woman with a moving tenderneſs; and concludes his ſpeech with a deſcription frequently given by Shakeſpeare, of the baſe nature of the whiffling multitude:

Unneath * may ſhe endure the flinty ſtreets,
To tread them with her tender feeling feet—

* *Unneath*, hardly, or ſcarcely; a Saxon or Norman adverb.

Sweet

Sweet Nell, ill can thy noble mind a-brook
The abject people gazing on thy face,
With envious looks ſtill laughing at thy ſhame,
That erſt did follow thy proud chariot wheels,
When thou didſt ride in triumph through the ſtreets.

ACT III. SCENE VII.

The following paſſage needs no comment.

King. What ſtronger breaſt-plate than a heart untainted?
Thrice is he armed, that hath his quarrel juſt;
And he but naked, though locked up in ſteel,
Whoſe conſcience with injuſtice is corrupted.

SCENE X.

This whole ſcene is ſo juſtly commended by all the critics, that I ſhall give it to the Reader intire.

The King, Saliſbury, and Warwick, ſtanding by the Cardinal, on his ſick-bed.

King. How fares my lord? Speak, Beaufort, to thy ſovereign.

Cardinal, raving.

If thou beeſt Death, I'll give thee England's treaſure,
Enough to purchaſe ſuch another iſland,
So thou wilt let me live, and feel no pain.

King. Ah, what a ſign it is of evil life,
Where death's approach is ſeen ſo terrible!

Warwick. Beaufort, it is thy ſovereign ſpeaks to thee.

Cardinal. Bring me unto my trial, when you will.
Died he not in his bed*? Where ſhould he die?
Can I make men live, whether they will or no?
Oh, torture me no more, I will confeſs—
Alive again? Then ſhew me where he is;
I'll give a thouſand pounds to look upon him—
He hath no eyes, the duſt hath blinded them—
Comb down his hair—look! look! it ſtands upright,
Like lime-twigs ſet to catch my winged ſoul—
Give me ſome drink, and bid the apothecary
Bring the ſtrong poiſon that I bought of him.

* Raving of Humphrey, whom he had cauſed to be murdered.

King. O thou Eternal Mover of the Heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
O beat away the busy meddling fiend,
That lays strong siege upon this wretch's soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair!

Warwick. See how the pangs of death do make him writhe!

Salisbury. Disturb him not—let him pass peaceably.

King. Peace to his soul, if God's good pleasure be!—
Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on Heaven's bliss,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope—
He dies, and makes no sign!—O God, forgive him.

Warwick. So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

King. Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.
Close up his eyes, and draw the curtain close,
And let us all to meditation.

The above scene closes, very properly, with a truly Christian sentiment, by the King, who is, all through, represented by Shakespeare as a religious, moral, domestic, easy-tempered man;

Famed for mildness, peace, and prayer *:

Just such a prince, whose very goodness, for want of sense and spirit, must ever render him the dupe of Ministers, and the sport of Faction.

No document, no example, are so effectual a warning to the mind, as the view of a wicked person in his last moments. This speaks to the heart, as well as to the understanding. We then see things and actions in their true light, which the false glare of gain or pleasure, or the involved and complicated nature of sin, are but too apt to hide from our notice. Vice would disgust even those that practise it, if they did not use arts to conceal the vileness of it from their own view. We drink liquors out of a cup, which are too foul to bear a glass.

* Third Part.

He

He who has betrayed a friend, deceived a miſtreſs, wronged the orphan, or oppreſſed the poor, muſt ſurely never have ſeen a penitent on his death-bed! What deſperate madneſs, then, muſt it be, ever to do a deed, for any advantage in life, which after ſo ſhort—*ſo very ſhort*—a ſpace of time, we would give a galaxy of worlds to have undone again!

This is the only way of rendering dramatic deaths profitable to the ſpectators. All the pantomime contortions, writhings, and flouncings, of modern repreſentations, cannot poſſibly produce ſuch an effect on the audience, as this ſingle expreſſion, *He dies, and makes no ſign.*

ACT IV. SCENE VIII.

King. Was ever king that joyed an earthly throne,
And could command no more content than I?
No ſooner was I crept out of my cradle,
But I was made a king at nine months old.
Yet never ſubject longed to be a king,
As I do long and wiſh to be a ſubject.

Shakeſpeare lays hold of every occaſion that fairly preſents itſelf, to put his readers out of conceit with greatneſs. And, in truth, the ſtate of kings in general, even the happieſt of them, who are undoubtedly *thoſe whoſe power is limited*, is not much to be envied. Their public care, if they rule only, or their private hazard, if they depute the helm, muſt deny them eaſe, the only foundation for earthly happineſs or enjoyment to reſt upon. Kings may, in ſome ſort, be compared to Popiſh idols, which are worſhipped and led about in pageant proceſſion, for the purpoſe of procuring ſome partial wiſh of the people; which if not obtained, however unreaſonable the petition, they are then ſcourged, and laid by in diſgrace.

HENRY THE SIXTH.

THIRD PART.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

HENRY THE SIXTH.
EARL OF RICHMOND, a Youth, afterwards Henry the Seventh.
LORD RIVERS, Brother to the Lady Gray, Wife to Edward Duke of York, afterwards Edward the Fourth.
LORD CLIFFORD.
LORD HASTINGS.

WOMEN.

MARGARET OF ANJOU, Queen to Henry VI.
LADY GRAY, Wife to Edward Duke of York, afterwards Queen.

HENRY the SIXTH.

THIRD PART.

MR. Theobald ſuſpects the three parts of this Drama to be ſpurious, on account of ſome obſolete expreſſions in them, *alder-lieveſt*, *unneath*, *mailed*, *me-ſeemeth*, *darraign*, *exigent*, *a-brook*, &c. *; and Dr. Warburton is of the ſame opinion, from the want of ſpirit and effect in the compoſition. If I was to offer an objection to the authenticity of theſe Pieces, it ſhould be rather from their barrenneſs of ſentiment, or reflection; though I think there is enough of the ſtyle and manner of Shakeſpeare, in them all, to evince them to be his.

ACT II. SCENE III.

There is a natural inſtinct, even ſtronger than that of ſelf-preſervation, implanted in all the brute creation for the ſafety of their young—The ſimpleſt animals manifeſt an art, and the moſt puſillanimous ſhew a courage, in the defence of their progeny; but this, only till they become capable of taking care of themſelves. Account for this Providence,

* Mr. Theobald does not enumerate the words, but I have taken this taſk upon me, in order to give the fulleſt force to his criticiſm. The Antients have left us an humane maxim, *that we ſhould never ſpeak ill of the dead.* I think we ſhould carry this moral even further, *by doing them every juſtice in our power.* What has particularly induced me to make this remark, is, that Dr. Johnſon ſays he can obſerve but two expreſſions of the old phraſeology, throughout theſe three Plays. I do not mean to make any compariſon between the ſenſe, knowledge, or literature of theſe two critics; but Dr. Johnſon is alive, to anſwer for himſelf, and poor Theobald muſt now ſpeak by another's tongue.

upon the principle of uninspired *mechanism*, if ye can, ye *unphilosophic* Sophisters!

Clifford. *Unreasonable* * creatures feed their young;
And though man's face be fearful to their eyes,
Yet, in protection of their tender ones,
Who hath not seen them, even with those wings
Which sometimes they have used with fearful flight,
Make war with him that climbs unto their nest,
Offering their own lives in their young's defence?

SCENE VI.

The ease and security of the subject is finely contrasted with the anxiety and danger of the Prince, in one of our Author's oft-repeated reflections upon this subject, in a soliloquy made by the King reclining on a hillock, during the warfare between the houses of York and Lancaster.

Would I were dead, if God's good will were so!
For what is in this world, but grief and woe?
O God! methinks it were a happier life,
To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point;
Thereby to mark the minutes as they run,
How many make the hour † full compleat,
How many hours bring about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the time;
So many hours must I tend my flock,
So many hours must I take my rest,
So many hours must I contemplate,
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young,
So many weeks ere the poor fools will yean,
So many months ere I shall sheer the fleece;

* *Irrational.*

† Throughout this speech, and many other places, our Author uses *hour* as a word of two syllables.

So

So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years,
Past over, to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
Ah! what a life were this! how sweet, how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich-embroidered canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?
O yes, it doth—a thousand-fold it doth.
And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched on a curious bed,
When care, mistrust, and treasons wait on him.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Upon the occasion of Queen Margaret and Warwick's going to France, one to solicit the aid of Lewis for Lancaster, and the other for York, poor Henry makes a very natural reflection, foreboding how the balance will probably incline, where interest holds the scales between two supplicants, whereof one has only something *to ask*, and the other something *to proffer*.

King. My queen and son are gone to France for aid;
And, as I hear, the great commanding Warwick
Is thither gone to crave the French king's sister
To wife for Edward. If this news be true,
Poor queen and son! your labour is but lost;
For Warwick is a subtle orator,
And Lewis a prince soon won with moving words.
By this account, then, Margaret may win him;
For she's a woman to be pitied much;
Her sighs will make a battery in his breast,
Her tears will pierce into a marble heart,
The tiger will be mild, while she doth mourn,
And Nero would be tainted with remorse,
To hear and see her plaints, her brinish tears.

Ay,

Ay, but she's come to beg—Warwick to give;
She, on his left side, craving aid for Henry;
He, on his right, asking a wife for Edward.
She weeps, and says, her Henry is deposed;
He smiles, and says, his Edward is installed;
That she, poor wretch, for grief can speak no more,
While Warwick tells his title, smooths the wrong,
Inferreth arguments of mighty strength,
And, in conclusion, wins the king from her,
With promise of his sister, and what else,
To strengthen and support king Edward's place.
O Margaret, thus 'twill be, and thou, poor soul,
Art then forsaken, as thou went'st forlorn.

In the same Scene, this unhappy Prince, who appears, throughout, to be more fit for a subject, than a king, and yet not the less fit to be the latter, *for this very reason*, replies with philosophy and virtue to the person who is going to take him prisoner, and who asks him,

But if thou be a king, where is thy crown?

King. My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
Not decked with diamonds and with Indian stones;
Not to be seen; my crown is called *Content*—
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.

In the last line we may see that Shakespeare takes one of his many occasions to humble ambition, and depreciate greatness. He is eternally acting the part of the slave placed behind the triumphal car; not, indeed, to shew his own envy, but to abate another's pride.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The true policy of England, with regard to all foreign states, is given here, in a very few words; with a particular hint of ministerial prudence, respecting all leagues or treaties with France.

Hastings. 'Tis better *using* France, than *trusting* her.
Let us be backed with God, and with the seas,

Which

Which he hath given for fence impregnable,
And with their helps alone defend ourselves—
In them, and in ourselves, our safety lies.

SCENE V.

After the observation above made, in the Third Scene, Act II. upon the fond instinct of all irrational animals for the preservation of their brood, it would be unjust, as well as unphilosophic too, not to pay a like compliment to our own species, by quoting a passage in this Scene, where the wife of Edward the Fourth marks the same kind of tenderness and attention, in a becoming manner, upon hearing that her husband has been made prisoner by Warwick.

Rivers. These news, I must confess, are full of grief,
Yet, gracious madam, bear it as you may;
Warwick may lose, that now hath won the day.
Queen. 'Till then fair hope must hinder life's decay.
And I the rather wean me from despair,
For love of Edward's offspring in my womb.
This is't that makes me bridle in my passion,
And bear with mildness my misfortune's cross.
Ay, ay, for this I draw in many a tear,
And stop the rising of blood-sucking sighs,
Lest with my sighs or tears I blast or drown
King Edward's fruit, true heir to England's crown.

SCENE VII.

Here Shakespeare takes an occasion, by the means of an *ex post facto* prophecy, to pay a compliment to Queen Elizabeth, resembling the *Tu, Marcellus eris* of Virgil to Livia.

The King, *to* Richmond, *laying his hand on his head.*
Come hither, England's hope—If secret powers
Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,
This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.
His looks are full of majesty,
His head by nature formed to wear a crown,

His

His hand to wield a ſceptre, and himſelf
Likely in time to bleſs a regal throne.
Make much of him, my lords, for this is he
Muſt help you more, than you are hurt by me.

This Earl of Richmond was afterwards Henry the Seventh, and united the two houſes of York and Lancaſter in his own perſon. He was grandfather to Queen Elizabeth.

ACT IV. SCENE VII.

I ſhall here conclude my remarks on this Play, with a truth which is not the leſs worth attending to for being ſpoken by a villain; as this character might have but the better enabled him to aſcertain the fact.

Glou. *Suſpicion always haunts the guilty mind—*
The thief doth fear each buſh an officer.

RICHARD THE THIRD.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

RICHARD, Duke of Glouceſter, afterwards Richard the Third.
EARL OF RICHMOND, afterwards Henry the Seventh.
EDWARD, Prince of Wales, } Sons to Edward the
RICHARD, Duke of York, } Fourth.
MARQUIS OF DORSET, Son to the Queen of Edward the Fourth, by her former Huſband.
LORD STANLEY.
LORD HASTINGS.
BISHOP OF ELY.
BRACKENBURY, Lieutenant of the Tower.
SIR JAMES TYRREL.
SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.

WOMEN.

QUEEN of Edward the Fourth.
LADY ANNE, Widow of the Prince of Wales, Son to Henry the Sixth.
DUCHESS OF YORK, Mother to Richard the Third.
COUNTESS OF RICHMOND, Mother to the Earl Richmond, and Wife to Lord Stanley.

RICHARD the THIRD.

ACT I. SCENE I.

EVERY representation, either of a scene or season of peace, is peculiarly soothing to the human mind. 'Tis its own most natural and pleasing state. But when it is contrasted with the opposite condition of tumult and war, the delight rises infinitely higher. There are many such descriptions as this in Shakespeare; and as the imbuing the mind with such contemplations must certainly have a moral tendency in it, I am glad to transcribe every passage of the kind I meet with in him.

Richard *alone.*

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York *,
And all the clouds that lowered upon our house,
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments,
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front;
And, now, instead of mounting barbed steeds,
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

In the following part of the same speech, our poet, zealous for the honour of the human character, most artfully contrives to make Richard's

* Edward the Fourth.

wickedness

wickedness appear to arise from a resentment against the partiality of Nature, in having stigmatized him with so deformed a person, joined to an envious jealousy towards the rest of mankind, for being endowed with fairer forms, and more attractive graces. By this admirable address, he moves us to a sort of compassion for the misfortune, even while he is raising an abhorrence for the vice, of the criminal.

Rich. But I that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass—
I that am rudely stampt, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton, ambling nymph—
I that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature *,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up;
And that so lamely and unfashionably,
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them—
Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,
And descant on my own deformity.
And, therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain,
And *bate* † the idle pleasures of these days.

SCENE II.

This long scene, in which Richard courts Lady Anne, relict of the first Prince of Wales, son to Henry the Sixth, whom he had murdered, is so well known to every one who has ever read or seen this Play, that I need not be at the trouble of

* The word *dissembling* is here strained to express *partial*, or *malicious*.

† *Bate*, resign, or scorn, instead of *bate*, which was the word in the Text. *Johnson.*

transcribing

transcribing it, though I shall take the liberty of remarking on the very improbable conclusion of it.

Women are certainy most extremely ill used in the unnatural representation of female frailty here given. But it may, perhaps, be some palliation of his offence, to observe, that this strange fable was not any invention of the poet; though it must indeed be confessed that he yielded too easy credence to a fictitious piece of history, which rested upon no better authority than the same that affirmed the deformity of Richard; which fact has lately, from a concurrence of cotemporary testimonies, been rendered problematical at least, by a learned and ingenious author *.

The conclusion of the Fifth Scene of Act the Fourth, in this Play, where the Queen, widow of Edward the Fourth, after the death of Lady Anne, promises her daughter to this tyrant and usurper, who had killed her sons, is founded likewise upon the same disingenuous authority with the two former passages.

SCENE III.

Lord Stanley, upon the Queen's expressing a suspicion that his wife, the countess of Richmond, bears her some ill will, makes her defence, in a speech that would conduce greatly to the peace of our minds, and the preserving many of our most friendly connections unbroken, if properly attended to, and made the rule of our conduct through life.

Stanley. I do beseech you, either not believe
The envious slanders of her false accusers;
Or if she be accused on true report,
Bear with her weakness, which, I think, proceeds
From wayward sickness, and no grounded malice.

* See a Tract upon this subject, by the Honourable Horatio Walpole.

The

The evil report of things ſaid to be ſpoken to the diſadvantage of others, behind their backs, has ſo frequently been found to proceed either from the malice or miſtake of eaves-droppers, liſteners, or incendiaries, that it ſhould warn us, upon ſuch occaſions, to ſuſpend our reſentment againſt the perſons charged, till we find the indictment to be grounded on better evidence than thoſe peſts of ſociety, the informers, intermeddlers or tale-bearers. Beſides which, as is above obſerved, every reaſonable allowance ought to be made for the natural frowardneſs and peeviſhneſs of diſorder, or other uneaſineſs of body or mind, which often ſets us firſt at variance with ourſelves, before it inclines us to quarrel with others.

" Infirmity doth ſtill neglect all office,
" Whereto our health is bound." LEAR.

SCENE V.

Shakeſpeare is here again at his frequent reflections on the vanity of ambition and the cares of greatneſs.

Brack. Sorrow breaks ſeaſons and repoſing hours,
Makes the night morning, and the noontide night—
Princes have but their titles for their troubles *,
An outward honour for an inward toil;
And for unfelt imaginations,
They often feel a world of reſtleſs cares—
So that between their titles, and low name,
There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

ACT II. SCENE II.

When the Queen is lamenting the death of Edward the Fourth, the marquis of Dorſet, her ſon by a former huſband, ſays to her,

* *Troubles*, for *glories*, well exchanged by Doctor Johnſon.

Dorſ.

Dorſ. Comfort, dear mother! God is much diſpleaſed,
That with unthankfulneſs you take his doing.
In common worldly things 'tis called ungrateful,
With dull unwillingneſs to pay a debt,
Which with a bounteous hand was kindly lent;
Much more to be thus oppoſite with Heaven;
For † it requires the royal debt it lent you.

Shakeſpeare is extremely rich in ſuch ſentiments of piety and reſignation. It is a vaſt eaſe to the diſtreſſed mind, to communicate its griefs to the ear of a friend, though he can only condole, but not relieve them. How infinitely higher, then, muſt the comfort riſe, to repoſe them on the boſom of our God, who can not only conſole, but compenſate them! Chriſt has not taken the *ſins* alone, but the *ſorrows* alſo of mankind upon himſelf, for thoſe who place their hope and put their truſt in him. He not only ſays, "Thy ſins are forgiven thee;" but adds this comfort in affliction, "Come "unto me all ye that *labour*, and are *heavy laden*, "and I will give ye *reſt*."

SCENE IV.

There is a natural repreſentation of a diſtempered ſtate, juſt preceding a revolution, given in this Scene.

Three citizens, conferring together on the circumſtances of the times, hold the following dialogue together.

Firſt Cit. Come, come, we fear the worſt, *all may be well.*

Second Cit. When clouds are ſeen, wiſe men put on their cloaks;
When great leaves fall, then winter is at hand;
When the ſun ſets, who doth not look for night?
Untimely ſtorms make men expect a dearth.

† *For*, to be underſtood here in the ſenſe of *becauſe*.

All

All may be well. But if God sort it so,
'Tis more than we deserve, or I expect.

Third Cit. Truly, the hearts of men are full of fear;
You cannot reason almost with a man,
That looks not heavily, and full of dread.

Second Cit. Before the days of change, still is it so—
By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
Ensuing danger; as by proof we see
The waters swell, before a boisterous storm—
But leave it all to God.

Now nothing can demonstrate the investigating faculties of Shakespeare, more than this passage does. He never lived in any times of commotion himself, therefore the particular knowledge he here shews, in the general nature of such a crisis, must be owing more to philosophy than experience; rather to his own reflection, than any knowledge of history. I speak with regard to the English writers only, on such subjects; who were all, before his time, most barren of observation and maxim. And as to the Greek and Roman historiographers, who were rich in both, the invidious Commentators of our Poet have denied him any manner of acquaintance with such *outlandish literati*; and I also, though from a very different principle, have *joined issue* with them before, in this particular *. For learning gives no talents, but only supplies the faculty of shewing them; and this he could do, without any foreign assistance.

ACT III. SCENE I.

The poor unhappy Prince of Wales, successor to Edward the Fourth, makes a reflection here, so becoming the natural spirit of a noble mind, that it must raise a regret in the Reader, that he was not permitted to live and reign over a brave and free people.

* In a note on Ely's speech, Hen. V. Act I. Scene II.

When

When his wicked uncle Richard appoints the Prince's residence at the *Tower*, till his coronation, he asks who built that fortress? and being told it was Julius Cæsar, he says,

That Julius Cæsar was a famous man:
With what his valour did enrich his wit,
His wit set down to make his valour live.
Death makes no conquest of this conqueror;
For still he lives in fame, though not in life.

SCENE V.

Rich. My lord of Ely, when I was last in *Holborn*,
I saw good strawberries in your garden there;
I do beseech you send for some of them.
Ely. Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart.
[*Exit* Ely.

Could any writer but Shakespeare have ever thought of such a circumstance, in the midst of a deep tragedy, as the sending an old grave Bishop on an errand for a *leaf of strawberries?* and this, in the most formal scene of the Play too, where the lords are met in council, to settle about the day for the coronation?

But could any writer but himself have attempted such a whim, without setting the audience a-laughing at the ridiculousness and absurdity of such an incident? And yet he contrives, some-how or other, to hold us in awe, all the while; though he must be a very ingenious critic, indeed, who can supply any sort of reason for the introduction of such a familiar and comic stroke, upon so serious an occasion. And what renders the solution of this passage still more difficult, is, that the request is made by a person, too, whose mind was deeply intent on murder and usurpation, at the very time.

None of the editors have taken the least notice of this article; and the first notion that occurred

to

to me upon it, was, that perhaps Richard wanted to get rid of old Ely, after any manner, however indecent or abrupt, in order to be at liberty to plot with Buckingham in private; for the moment the Bishop goes out on his errand, he says,

Cousin of Buckingham, a word with you.

But as he did not send the rest of the Council-Board a-packing after him, and adjourn them from *the bed of justice* to the *strawberry bed*, but retires immediately himself with his complotter Buckingham, we cannot suppose this idea to have been the purpose intended by so extraordinary a motion.

There is, then, no other way left us to resolve this text, than to impute it solely to the peculiar character that Shakespeare has given us all along of this extraordinary personage; whom he has represented throughout, as preserving a facetious humour, and exerting a sort of careless ease, in the midst of all his crimes.

I am sorry not to be able to give a better account of this particular, than what I have here offered; because, if it is to rest upon such a comment, our author must, in this instance, be thought to have betrayed a manifest ignorance in human nature, or the nature of guilt at least; as no vicious person, I do not mean those of profligate manners merely, but no designing or determined villain was ever chearful, yet, or could possibly be able to assume even the semblance of carelessness or ease, upon any occasion whatsoever.

In the latter part of this Scene, poor Hastings, just before he mounts the scaffold, makes a reflection, which too frequently occurs to those *who put their trust in princes*; or, indeed, in general, to all who rest their hope on any other stay but their own uprightness and virtue.

Hastings.

Haſtings. O momentary grace of mortal men,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hope in air of your fair looks,
Lives like a drunken ſailor on a maſt,
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

Among the various crimes of man, murder ſtands in a diſtinct claſs above them all; except, perhaps, ſuicide, as being of the ſame ſpecies, may be allowed to rank with, or even to exceed, it. The latter part of this poſition, though, has been diſputed by ſome moral caſuiſts; but I ſhall enter no further into the argument here, than juſt to obſerve, that one of theſe acts does not ſhock the human mind ſo much as the other. We are ſenſible of a tenderneſs and compaſſion for the unhappy ſelf-devoted victim, but are impreſſed both with an horror and deteſtation againſt the homicide.

But the circumſtance which moſt eminently diſtinguiſhes both of theſe crimes from every other ſpecies of guilt, is their being ſo wholly repugnant to nature. In other vices, we may ſuffer a temptation, and have only a moral ſtruggle to conquer; but one muſt be trained, be *educated* to theſe, muſt ſtifle ſympathy, and overcome our *firſt*, by a *ſecond* nature.

And of all murders, from the days of *Herod* to theſe, the killing a child muſt ſurely raiſe a ſtronger war in the moſt hardened villain's breaſt, than the ſlaughter of an adult. Its innocence, its engaging manners, even its very helpleſſneſs, muſt plead ſo movingly in its defence, as to render the deed, one ſhould think, impoſſible! Might not the idea of a child's coming ſo recently out of the hands of its Creator, ſerve alſo to impreſs an additional awe on

the mind of the malefactor, at ſuch a time? If ſuperſtition can ever be excuſed for its weakneſs, it muſt ſurely be in ſuch an inſtance as this.

Shakeſpeare has wrought up an horrid and affecting picture, in this ſcene, upon the latter part of this ſubject, where he makes one of the murderers give an account of the maſſacre of Edward's two children.

Tyrrel. The tyrannous and bloody act is done!
The moſt arch deed of piteous maſſacre,
That ever yet this land was guilty of!
Dighton and *Forreſt*, whom I did ſuborn
To do this piece of ruthleſs butchery,
(Albeit they were fleſht villains, bloody dogs),
Melting with tenderneſs and mild compaſſion,
Wept like two children in their death's ſad ſtory.
O thus, quoth *Dighton*, lay the gentle babes——
Thus, thus, quoth *Forreſt*, girdling one another
Within their innocent alabaſter arms;
Their lips were four red roſes on a ſtalk,
And in their ſummer beauty kiſſed each other.
A book of prayers on their pillow lay,
Which once, quoth *Forreſt*, almoſt changed my mind—
But, oh! the devil——There the villain ſtopt,
When *Dighton* thus told on—We ſmothered
The moſt repleniſhed ſweet work of nature,
That from the prime creation e'er ſhe framed—
Hence both are gone. With conſcience and remorſe
They could not ſpeak.

In the latter part of the ſame Scene is expreſſed a juſt and ſpirited maxim, which, I believe, will be ſufficiently vouched by experience, That in difficult matters, quick reſolves and briſk actions generally ſucceed better than ſlow counſels and circumſpect conduct.

Richard, on hearing of the defection of his forces:

Come,

Come, I have learned that fearful commenting
Is leaden servitor to dull delay.
Delay leads impotent and snail-paced beggary—
Then fiery expedition be my wing,
Jove's Mercury, and herald for a king.
Go, muster men, my council is my shield,
We must be brief, when traitors brave the field.

SCENE IV.

The temporary relief, which an opportunity of expressing its sorrows affords to the mind of a person in affliction, is poetically described in a passage here.

The Queen *and* Duchess *of* York.

Duch. Why should calamity be full of words?
Queen. Windy attornies to their client-woes,
Airy succeeders of *intestate joys* *,
Poor breathing orators of miseries!
Let them have scope, though what they do impart,
Help nothing else, yet they do ease the heart.

ACT V. SCENE V.

In this Scene, the adverse camps are supposed to be pitched near each other at night, ready to join battle in the morning; and in the space between, the spirits of all the persons murdered by *Richard* arise, threatening destruction to him, and promising success to *Richmond*. But the ghosts here are not to be taken literally; they are to be understood only as an allegorical representation of those images or ideas which naturally occur to the minds of men during their sleep, referring to the actions of their lives, whether good or bad.

* *Intestate joys.* This expression is difficult. The only editor who has taken notice of it, is Theobald; but his comment is as obscure as the text. I shall not attempt it.

"Sweet are the ſlumbers of the virtuous man," ſays Addiſon, in his Cato; and a modern writer, in a poem on the ſubject of dreams, moſt emphatically expreſſes himſelf thus:

"Nor are the oppreſſor's crimes in ſleep forgot;
"He ſtarts appalled, *for conſcience ſlumbers not* †."

That this is the ſenſe in which our poet meant this Scene to be accepted, is fully evident from his repreſenting both *Richard* and *Richmond* to have been aſleep during the apparition, and therefore capable of receiving thoſe notices in *the mind*'s *eye* only, as Hamlet ſays; which intirely removes the ſeeming abſurdity of ſuch an exhibition.

The ſoliloquy of ſelf-accuſation, which Richard enters upon alone, immediately after the ſpectral viſion is cloſed, though ſo ſtrongly marked, is nothing more than might be ſuppoſed natural, in the circumſtances and ſituation of the ſpeaker, as there deſcribed.

Richard, *ſtarting from his couch.*

Give me another horſe—bind up my wounds—
Have mercy, Jeſu——Soft, I did but dream.
O coward conſcience, how doſt thou afflict me?
The lights burn blue—is it not dead midnight?
Cold fearful drops ſtand on my trembling fleſh—
What! do I fear myſelf? there's none elſe by. . . .
My conſcience hath a thouſand ſeveral tongues,
And every tongue brings in a ſeveral tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain. . . .
All ſeveral ſins, all uſed in each degree,
Throng to the bar, all crying, *Guilty! guilty!*
I ſhall deſpair—There is no creature loves me;
And if I die, no ſoul ſhall pity me.
Nay, wherefore ſhould they? Since even I myſelf
Find in myſelf no pity for myſelf.

† *Something New*, Chap. XLIX.

Enter

Enter Ratcliff.

Rich. Who's there?
Rat. My lord, the early village cock
Hath twice done ſalutation to the morn;
Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour.
Rich. Ratcliff, I fear, I fear.
Rat. Nay, good my lord, be not afraid of ſhadows.
Rich. By the apoſtle *Paul*, ſhadows, to-night,
Have ſtruck more terror to the ſoul of *Richard*,
Than can the ſubſtance of ten thouſand ſoldiers,
Armed in proof, and led by ſhallow *Richmond*.

* * *

I ſhall here cloſe my obſervations on this Play, with a reflection on the laſt paragraph above.

Such is the nature of man, that the ſlighteſt alarm, ariſing from within, diſcomfits him more than the greateſt dangers preſenting themſelves from without. Body may be overcome by body, but the mind only can conquer itſelf. Notions of religion are natural to all men, in ſome ſort or other. The good are inſpired by devotion, the bad terrified by ſuperſtition. The admonitions of conſcience are taken for ſupernatural emotions, and this awes us more than any difficulty in the common courſe of things. Man has been ſeverally defined a *riſible*, a *rational*, a *religious*, and a *baſhful* animal. May I take the liberty of adding the farther criterion of his being a *conſcientious* one? And this diſtinction, I ſhall venture to ſay, is leſs equivocal than any of the others.

HENRY the EIGHTH.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

HENRY THE EIGHTH.
DUKE OF NORFOLK.
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.
CARDINAL WOLSEY.
CARDINAL CAMPEIUS, Legate from the Pope.
CAPUCIUS, Ambaſſador from the Emperor Charles the Fifth.
LORD CHAMBERLAIN.
LORD SANDS.
SIR THOMAS LOVELL.
CROMWELL, Secretary to Wolſey.
GRIFFITH, Gentleman Uſher to Queen Catharine.
GROOM of the Chambers to the Queen.
A MESSENGER.

W O M E N.

QUEEN CATHARINE.
ANNE BULLEN.
PATIENCE, Lady of the Bed-chamber to the Queen.

HENRY the EIGHTH.

ACT I. SCENE I.

As Cardinal Wolsey stands a distinguished character in history, having raised himself from the meanest origin * to the highest pitch of power, consideration, and station, that a subject could well arrive at, by the sole advantages of learning and natural endowments; and whose end was unfortunate, through vanity, insolence, and the unstable favour of princes; there may be an useful lesson deduced from every circumstance of his life, respecting either his rise, grandeur, or decline.

In a dialogue between Buckingham and Norfolk, in this Scene, the former speaking of his vanity and presumption, with that contempt which persons of *noble families and hereditary fortunes* are sometimes too apt to express towards men *whose whole worth is centered in themselves*, the latter engages in his defence, upon a very just and liberal argument.

Norfolk. Yet, surely, Sir,
There's in him stuff that puts him to these ends;
For not being propt by ancestry, whose grace
Chalks successors their way; nor called upon
For high feats done to the crown; neither allied
To eminent assistants; but spider-like
Out of his self-drawing web—This gives us note,
The force of his own merit makes his way;
A gift that Heaven gives to him, which buys
A place next to the king.

* He was the son of a butcher.

Doctor Young treats the same subject in as proper a manner, but with the addition of satire, and ridicule.

"Let high birth triumph! What can be more great?
"Nothing—*but merit in a low estate.* UNIVER. PAS.

SCENE II.

The angry Duke repeats his spleen against him in this Scene also, upon the same proud prejudice, or mistaken estimate of things.

Bucking. A beggar's-book out-worths a noble's blood.

This *most noble and puissant prince* * was unlucky in having lived in such an *ignoble* age—*Nobles* meet with no such mortifications, *now-a-days.*

In the continuation of this dialogue, the impatient spirit of Buckingham is finely contrasted with the calm temper of Norfolk, who illustrates his documents of prudence to him, with equal philosophy and poesy.

The Cardinal had just crossed the Scene, in all his state, casting a look of disdain on Buckingham, which the more raised his choler.

Norfolk. What, are you chafed?
Ask God for temperance; that's the appliance only,
Which your disease requires.
Bucking. I read in's look,
Matter against me, and his eye reviled
Me, as his abject object; at this instant,
He bores † me with some trick. He's gone to th' king—
I'll follow, and outstare him.
Norfolk. Stay, my lord,
And let your reason with your choler question,
What 'tis you go about. To climb steep hills,
Requires slow pace at first. *Anger is like*
A full-hot horse, who being allowed his way,

* The stile and title of a Duke.

† I do not comprehend the meaning of this expression, and the Commentators have given me no assistance.

Self-

Self-mettle tires him. Not a man in England
Can advise me, like you—Be to yourself,
As you would to your friend.
Bucking. I'll to the king,
And from *a mouth of honour* quite cry down
This *Ipswich* * fellow's insolence; or proclaim
There's difference in no persons.
Norfolk. Be advised;
Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot,
That it shall singe yourself. We may out-run,
By over-swiftness, that which we run at,
And lose by over-running—Know you not,
The fire that mounts the liquor 'till 't run o'er,
Seeming to augment, but wastes it? Be advised;
I say again, there is no English soul
More stronger to direct you than yourself,
If with the sap of reason you would quench,
Or but allay, the fire of passion.

The character which Norfolk here gives to Buckingham of himself, is too common in life: Persons whose sense and judgment are sufficiently qualified to direct others, but who, from the force of passion and indiscretion, are rendered incapable of guiding themselves. *To advise*, and to *be advised*, are by no means the *active* and *passive* of the same *verb*, as they differ so widely in their *moods* and *tenses*. I have made my apology before †, for such *jeux de mots*, which our Author's stile is apt to lead one into.

SCENE IV.

There is an excellent lesson for kings, given in this place, as well as in many other passages of Shakespeare. The honour and safety of princes are so much confided to the sense and conduct of their Ministers, that such trustees for the State should be ever selected with the nicest judgment

* The place of Wolsey's nativity.
† Hen. VI. Part II. Act II. Scene II. The note.

and

and ſtricteſt impartiality; in which choice, virtue ſhould be at leaſt *equally* regarded with talents. Were the crown teſtamentary, a ſovereign ſhould be circumſpect to whoſe hands he intruſted the government of his people, even after his death; and how much more ſolicitous ought he to be, with reſpect to thoſe appointed to rule, while his own glory and intereſt lie ſo immediately at ſtake!

The great *Condé* complimented *Corneille*'s Play of *Cinna*, by ſtiling it *The Breviary of Kings*—I think that many of Shakeſpeare's pieces much better deſerve that name. But, indeed, his writings may well challenge a more general and comprehenſive title, and be called the *Manual of Mankind*; as containing rules and reflections for every ſtate and condition of life, throughout the intire compaſs of human nature, from the peaſant to the prince.

The Council Chamber.

The King, *the* Cardinal, *and the Nobles ſeated. The* Queen *enters, walks up to the foot of the throne, and kneels before the* King, *in the quality of a ſuitor.*

Cath. I am ſolicited, not by a few,
And thoſe of true condition, that your ſubjects
Are in great grievance. There have been commiſſions
Sent down among them, which have flawed the heart
Of all their loyalties; wherein, although,
My good lord Cardinal, they vent reproaches
Moſt bitterly on you, as putter on
Of theſe exactions, *yet the king, our maſter,*
Whoſe honour Heaven ſhield from ſoil, even he 'ſcapes not
Language unmannerly; yea, ſuch which breaks
The ſides of loyalty, and almoſt appears
In loud rebellion.
This makes bold mouths;
Tongues ſpit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze
Allegiance in them; all their curſes, now,
Live where their prayers did; and it's come to paſs,
That tractable obedience is a ſlave
To each incenſed will. I would your highneſs

Would

Would give it quick consideration, for
There is no primer business.

But before we close this Scene, let us shew our impartiality, by suffering the Minister to speak a few words in his own defence; which he does, very well, by urging reflections that have a good deal of truth in them, and shew the danger and difficulty of such a station, even in the best and ablest hands.

Wolsey. If I am traduced by tongues which neither know
My faculties or person, yet will be
The chronicles of my doing, let me say
'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake
That virtue must go through. We must not stint
Our necessary actions, in the fear
To cope malicious censurers; which ever,
As ravenous fishes do a vessel follow,
That is new trimmed, but benefit no further
Than vainly longing. What we oft do best,
By sick interpreters or weak ones, is
Not ours, or not allowed; what worst, as oft,
Hitting a grosser quality *, is cried up
For our best act. If we stand still, in fear
Our motion will be mocked or carped at,
We should take root here, where we sit, or sit
State-statues only.

SCENE VI.

The following Scene must have had an admirable effect, at the time of its first representation; nor, indeed, is it passed by, even now, without applause from the Pit and Galleries, where the most rational and virtuous part of our audiences are generally seated; though it may, perhaps, be looked upon but as a remain of our antient barbarism, by the Boxes, among those who have inadvertently chosen

* *Quality* for *conception.*

to *ſtigmatize* themſelves by a diſtinction which accidentally took its riſe from the very foible here ridiculed; namely, perſons of *Faſhion.*

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter Lord Chamberlain, *and* Lord Sands.

Lord Cham. Is't poſſible the ſpells of France ſhould juggle
Men into ſuch ſtrange myſteries?
Sands. New cuſtoms,
Though they be never ſo ridiculous,
Nay, let them be unmanly, yet are followed.
Cham. As far as I ſee, all the good our Engliſh
Have got by the laſt voyage *, is but merely
A fit or two o' th' face †, but they are ſhrewd ones;
For when they hold 'em, you would ſwear directly
Their very noſes had been counſellors
To *Pepin*, or *Clotharius*, they keep ſtate ſo.
Sands. They've all new legs, and lame ones; one would take it,
That never ſaw them pace, before, the ſpavin
And ſpring-halt reigned among 'em.
Cham. Death, my lord,
Their cloaths are after ſuch a Pagan cut, too,
That ſure they've worn out Chriſtendom.

Enter Sir Thomas Lovell.

How now?
What news, Sir Thomas Lovell?
Lovell. Faith, my lord,
I hear of none, but the new proclamation,
That's clapped upon the court-gate.
Cham. What is't for?
Lovell. The reformation of our travelled gallants,
That fill the court with *quarrels, talk, and tailors.*

* When Henry the Eighth went to the congreſs or interview with Francis the Firſt, between Guiſnes and Ardres, with a ſumptuous retinue.
† Grimace.

Cham.

Cham. I'm glad 'tis there—Now I would pray our *Monsieurs*
To think an *English* courtier may be wise,
And never see the *Louvre*.

Lovell. They must either,
For so run the conditions, leave those remnants
Of fool and feather, that they got in *France*,
With all their *honourable points of ignorance*,
Pertaining thereunto, as fights and fire-works,
Abusing better men than they can be,
Out of a foreign wisdom, clean renouncing
The faith they have in *Tennis*, and tall stockings,
Short bolstered breeches, and such types of travel,
And understand again like honest men,
Or pack to their old play-fellows—There, I take it,
They may, *cum privilegio*, wear away
The lag-end of their lewdness, and be laughed at.

Sands. 'Tis time to give them physic, their diseases
Are grown so catching.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Here the unhappy Buckingham, in his *last speech*, as it may be called, just before his execution, on recapitulating the vicissitudes and misfortunes of his family, makes proper reflections on the indiscretion of placing a confidence in the fidelity of mean dependants.

Whether it arises from low birth, or base condition of life, which are apt to depress the native vigour of the mind, and render all its principles and ideas servile and selfish, I shall not loiter here to make an inquisition into; it being sufficient to the present argument, that the fact itself, from the experience of mankind, affords us but too much authority to pronounce the truth of the observation.

Bucking. My noble father, *Henry* of *Buckingham*,
Who first raised head against usurping *Richard*,
Flying for succour to his servant *Banister*,
Being distressed, was by that wretch betrayed.

Henry

Henry the Eighth, life, name, honour, and all
That made me happy, at one ſtroke has taken
For ever from the world. . . . .
Thus far we are one in fortune; both
Fell by our ſervants*, by thoſe men we loved moſt!
A moſt unnatural and faithleſs ſervice!
Heaven has an end in all—Yet, you that hear me,
This from a dying man receive as certain:
Where you are liberal of your loves and counſels,
Be ſure you are not looſe; thoſe you make friends,
And give your hearts to, when they once perceive
The leaſt rub in your fortunes, fall away
Like water from ye, never found again,
But where they mean to ſink ye. All good people,
Pray for me! I muſt leave ye; the laſt hour
Of my long weary life is come upon me.
Farewel; and when you would ſay ſomething ſad,
Speak how I fell—I've done; and God forgive me!

I deſigned to have left off above, at the period in the laſt line but four, as the ſpeech ended properly there, as far as relates to the argument I had framed upon it; but I actually found myſelf impreſſed with ſomething like an idea of impiety, to interrupt the ſpeaker, before he had concluded his prayer—I am ſenſible of a certain refined pleaſure, in the ſentiment which prompted my pen further on this paſſage; however, the *ſtronger mind* of the Reader may amuſe himſelf at the weakneſs and ſuperſtition of my motive.

SCENE VI.

The character of Queen Catharine is finely drawn in this Play. A becoming demeanour is preſerved throughout every ſituation and circumſtance ſhe is placed in. She diſcovers that dignity and ſpirit which become the wife and daughter of a king, ſhews the duty and obedience which a huſband

* This Duke was betrayed by his ſurveyor, chancellor, and confeſſor.

and

and a ſovereign have a right to claim, and ſpeaks, on her own part, with ſuch a noble confidence, as injured innocence may fully warrant. One can never be too much aſſured, in a juſt cauſe, either of their own, or of others; for whoever defends the rights of the oppreſſed, fights under the banner of Providence.

I ſhall not interrupt the following dialogues, as far as they relate to her, to point out the paſſages which may be applied to the ſeveral parts of the character above given of her; but, as in former inſtances of the ſame kind, in the courſe of theſe notes, ſhall leave the Reader to mark and refer them himſelf, as he goes along.

Black-Fryers.

The King, *with his Biſhops, Nobles, &c. aſſembled in a Council of Inqueſt, to try the validity of the marriage; where* Catharine *appears, as ſummoned on the examination.*

Crier. Catharine, Queen of England, come into the court.

The Queen *makes no anſwer, but riſing from her ſeat goes to the king, kneels, and then ſpeaks:*

Cath. Sir, I deſire you do me right and juſtice,
And to beſtow your pity on me; for
I am a moſt poor woman, and a ſtranger,
Born out of your dominions; having here
No judge indifferent *, and no more aſſurance
Of equal friendſhip and proceeding. Alas! Sir,
In what have I offended you? what cauſe
Hath my behaviour given to your diſpleaſure,
That thus you ſhould proceed to put me off,
And take your good grace from me? Heaven witneſs,
I've been to you a true and humble wife,
At all times to your will conformable,
Ever in fear to kindle your diſlike;
Yea, ſubject to your countenance, glad or ſorry

* *Impartial.*

As

As I saw it inclined. When was the hour,
I ever contradicted your desire?
Or made it not mine too? Which of your friends
Have I not strove to love, although I knew
He were mine enemy? What friend of mine,
That had to him derived your anger, did I
Continue in my liking? Nay, gave not notice
He was from thence discharged? Sir, call to mind,
That I have been your wife, in this obedience,
Upwards of twenty years, and have been blest
With many children by you; if, in the course
And process of this time, you can report,
And prove it too, against mine honour aught,
My bond of wedlock, or my love and duty,
Against your sacred person, in God's name,
Turn me away, and let the foul'st contempt
Shut door against me, and so give me up
To th' sharpest kind of justice. Please you, Sir,
The king your father was reputed for
A prince most prudent, of an excellent
And unmatched wit and judgment. Ferdinand
My father, king of Spain, was reckoned one
The wisest prince that there had reigned, by many
A year before. It is not to be questioned
That they had gathered a wise council to them,
Of every realm, that did debate this business,
Who deemed our marriage lawful. Wherefore, humbly,
Sir, I beseech you spare me, 'till I may
Be by my friends in Spain advised; whose counsel
I will implore. If not, i' th' name of God,
Your pleasure be fulfilled! [*Rises.*

Wolsey. You have here, lady,
And of your choice, these reverend fathers, men
Of singular integrity and learning;
Yea, the elect o' th' land, who are assembled
To plead your cause. It shall be, therefore, bootless
That longer you defer the court, as well
For your own quiet, as to rectify
What is unsettled in the king.

Camp. His grace
Hath spoken well and justly; therefore, madam,
It's fit this royal session do proceed;

And

And that without delay their argument
Be now produced and heard.
Cath. Lord Cardinal,
To you I ſpeak.
Wolſey. Your pleaſure, madam?
Cath. Sir,
I am about to weep; but thinking that
We are a Queen, or long have dreamed ſo; certain,
The daughter of a king; my drops of tears
I'll turn to ſparks of fire.
Wolſey. Be patient yet—
Cath. I will, when you are humble—Nay, before—
Induced by potent circumſtances that
You are mine enemy, I make my challenge*
You ſhall not be my judge. For it is you
Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me,
Which God's dew quench! Therefore, I ſay again,
I utterly abhor, yea, from my ſoul,
Refuſe you for my judge, whom yet once more
I hold my moſt malicious foe, and think not
At all a friend to truth.

Here Wolſey enters into a juſtification of himſelf, in a long ſpeech, which relates not to the preſent purpoſe, in which he demeans himſelf with great reſpect toward the Queen, and ſpeaks in his own defence with all ſeeming moderation and temper—To which ſhe replies:

Cath. My lord, my lord,
I am a ſimple woman, much too weak
To oppoſe your cunning. You are meek, and humble-mouthed;
You ſign † your place and calling, in full ſeeming,
With meekneſs and humility; but your heart
Is crammed with arrogancy, ſpleen and pride.
You have, by fortune, and his highneſs' favours,

* *Challenge* is a law term, for perſons on their trial objecting to a Juryman.

† *Sign*—That is, you make an *outward ſhew* of your holy function.

Gone

Gone ſlightly o'er low ſteps; and now are mounted,
Where powers are your retainers; and your words,
Domeſticks to you, ſerve your will as't pleaſe
Yourſelf pronounce their office*. I muſt tell you,
You tender more your perſon's honour, than
Your high profeſſion ſpiritual; that again,
I do refuſe you for my judge; and here,
Before ye all, appeal unto the Pope,
To bring my whole cauſe 'fore his holineſs;
And to be judged by him.

Here ſhe makes an obeiſſance to the king, and offers to depart the court.

Camp. The queen is obſtinate,
Stubborn to juſtice, apt to accuſe it, and
Diſdainful to be tried by's—'Tis not well—
She's going away.

Henry. Call her again.

Crier. Catharine, Queen of England, come into the court.

Griffith. Madam you are called back.

Cath. What need you note it? Pray you, keep your way—
When you are called, return—Now the lord help!
They vex me paſt my patience! Pray you, paſs on.
I will not tarry—No, nor ever more
Upon this buſineſs my appearance make
In any of their courts.

[*Exeunt* Queen *and her Train.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

I ſhall not prevent the Reader's own feelings and reflections upon this fine and affecting Scene, in which the Queen's character is further diſplayed, by any remarks of my own upon the ſeveral parts of it.

* *You have arrived at ſuch an height of power, that you may do and undo, or ſay and unſay, whatever you pleaſe, without controul.*

The

The Queen's *Apartment.*

The Queen *and her Women, as at Work* *.

Cath. Take thy lute, wench, my ſoul grows ſad with troubles;
Sing and diſperſe them, if thou can'ſt; leave working.
[*Song.*

Enter Groom *of the Chambers.*

Cath. How now?
Groom. An't pleaſe your grace, the two great Cardinals
Wait in the preſence.
Cath. Would they ſpeak with me?
Groom. They willed me ſay ſo, madam.
Cath. Pray their graces
To come near. What can be their buſineſs
With me, a poor weak woman, fallen from favour?
[*Exit* Groom.
I do not like their coming. Now I think on't,
They ſhould be good men, their affairs † are righteous;
But all hoods make not monks ‡.

Enter the Cardinals Wolſey *and* Campeius.

Wolſey. Peace to your highneſs!
Cath. Your graces find me here part of a houſe-wife;
I would be all, againſt the worſt may happen.
What are your pleaſures with me, reverend lords?
Wolſey. May't pleaſe you, noble madam, to withdraw
Into your private chamber; we ſhall give you
The full cauſe of our coming.
Cath. Speak it here.
There's nothing I have done yet, o' my conſcience,
Deſerves a corner—'Would all other women
Could ſpeak this with as free a ſoul as I do!

* This is an *antiquated* Engliſh Scene, but has been revived again, I hear, by Her Majeſty, in the preſent reign;
" Who ſhines Penelope, among
" Her choſen female band, who ply
" The needle's art, and fix the flower's perennial dye."
BELLAMY. Ethic Amuſements.

† *Affairs.* Office, profeſſion, or calling.

‡ A literal tranſlation of the latin proverb, *Cucullus non facit monachum.*

My

My lords, I care not, so much I am happy
Above a number, if my actions
Were tried by every tongue, every eye saw them,
Envy and base opinion set against 'em;
I know my life so even. If your business
Do seek me out, and that way I am wife in *,
Out with it boldly. Truth loves open dealing.

Wolsey. Tanta est erga te mentis integritas, Regina serenissima—

Cath. O, good my lord, no Latin;
I am not such a truant since my coming,
As not to know the language I have lived in.
A strange tongue makes my cause more strange, suspicious.
Pray, speak in English; here are some will thank you,
If you speak truth, for their poor mistress' sake.
Believe me, she has had much wrong. Lord Cardinal,
The willing'st sin I ever yet committed,
May be absolved in English.

Wolsey. Noble lady,
I'm sorry my integrity to you,
And service to his majesty, should breed †
So deep suspicion, where all faith was meant.
We come not by the way of accusation,
To taint that honour every good tongue blesses,
Nor to betray you any way to sorrow;
You have too much, good lady; but to know
How you stand minded in the weighty difference,
Between the king and you; and to deliver,
Like free and honest men, our just opinions
And comforts to your cause.

Camp. Most honoured madam,
My lord of *York* ‡, out of his noble nature,
Zeal and obedience he still bears your grace,
Forgetting, like a good man, your late censure,
Both of his truth and him, which was too far,

* That is, if you are come to examine my title as a wife, or my behaviour under that character. Johnson.

† I have ventured to transpose some of the words in these two lines, in order to render the sense more intelligible.

‡ Wolsey was Archbishop of York.

Offers,

Offers, as I do, in a ſign of peace,
His ſervice, and his counſel—
Cath. To betray me.
My lords, I thank you both for your good wills;
Ye ſpeak like honeſt men; pray God, ye prove ſo!
But how to make ye ſuddenly an anſwer,
In ſuch a point of weight, ſo near mine honour,
More near my life, I fear, with my weak wit,
And to ſuch men of gravity and learning,
In truth, I know not. I was ſet at work,
Among my maids; full little, God knows, looking
Either for ſuch men, or ſuch buſineſs.
For her ſake that I have been, for I feel
The laſt fit of my greatneſs, good your graces,
Let me have time and counſel for my cauſe.
Alas! I am a woman, friendleſs, hopeleſs!
Wolſey. Madam, you wrong the king's love with thoſe fears.
Your hopes and friends are infinite.
Cath. In England
But little for my profit; can you think, lords,
That any Engliſhman dare give me counſel?
Or be a known friend 'gainſt his highneſs' pleaſure,
Though he be grown ſo deſperate to be honeſt,
And live a ſubject? Nay, forſooth—My friends,
They that muſt weigh out * my afflictions,
They that my truſt muſt grow to, live not here;
They are, as all my comforts are, far hence,
In my own country, lords.
Camp. I would your grace
Would leave your griefs, and take my counſel.
Cath. How, Sir?
Camp. Put your main cauſe into the king's protection;
He's loving, and moſt gracious. 'Twill be much
Both for your honour better, and your cauſe;
For, if the trial of the law o'ertake you,
You'll part away diſgraced.
Wolſey. He tells you rightly.

* The Editors are at a loſs about this expreſſion. *To weigh out* certainly means, here, *to unload.* 'Tis a mercantile phraſe for unfreighting a cargo.

Cath.

Cath. Ye tell me what ye wish for, both, my ruin—
Is this your christian counsel? Out upon ye!
Heaven is above all yet; there sits a Judge,
That no king can corrupt.

Camp. Your rage mistakes us.

Cath. The more shame for you --- Holy men I thought ye,
Upon my soul, two reverend cardinal virtues;
But cardinal sins and hollow hearts, I fear you.
Mend them, for shame, my lords. Is this your comfort?
The cordial that you bring a wretched lady?
A woman lost among ye, laughed at, scorned?
I will not wish you half my miseries---
I have more charity. But say I warned ye;
Take heed, take heed, for Heaven's sake, left at once
The burden of my sorrows fall upon you.

Wolsey. Madam, this is a mere distraction---
You turn the good we offer into envy *.

Cath. Ye turn me into nothing. Woe upon you,
And all such false professors! Would ye have me,
If ye have any justice, any pity,
If ye be any thing but Churchmen's habits,
Put my sick cause into his hands that hates me?
Alas! h' as banished me his bed already;
His love too, long ago. I'm old, my lords;
And all the fellowship I hold now with him,
Is only my obedience. What can happen
To me above this wretchedness! All your studies
Make me a curse like this!

Camp. Your fears are worse——

Cath. Have I lived thus long—(let me speak, myself,
Since virtue finds no friends) a wife, a true one?
A woman, I dare say without vain-glory,
Never yet branded with suspicion?
Have I, with all my full affections,
Still met the king? loved him next Heaven? obeyed him?
Almost forgot my prayers to content him?
And am I thus rewarded? 'Tis not well, lords,
Bring me a constant woman to her husband,
One that ne'er dreamed a joy beyond his pleasure:

* *Envy*, put for *malice*, or *mischief*.

And

And to that woman, when she has done most,
Yet will I add an honour—*A great patience.*

Wolsey. Madam, you wander from the good we aim at.

Cath. My lord, I dare not make myself so guilty,
To give up willingly that noble title
Your master wed me to; nothing but death
Shall e'er divorce my dignities.

Wolsey. Pray, hear me——

Cath. 'Would I had never trod this English earth,
Or felt the flatteries that grow upon it!
Ye've angels' faces, but Heaven knows your hearts—
What shall become of me, now! wretched lady!
I am the most unhappy woman living.
Alas! poor wenches, where are now your fortunes?
To her women.
Ship-wreck'd upon a kingdom where no pity,
No friends, no hope, no kindred weep for me;
Almost no grave allowed me. Like the lily,
That once was mistress of the field, and flourished,
I'll hang my head, and perish.

Wolsey. If your grace
Could but be brought to know our ends are honest,
You'd feel more comfort. Why should we, good lady,
Upon what cause, wrong you? Alas! our places,
The way of our profession, is against it;
We are to cure such sorrows, not to sow them.
For goodness' sake, consider what you do;
How you may hurt yourself; nay, utterly
Grow from the king's acquaintance, by this carriage.
The hearts of princes kiss obedience,
So much they love it; but to stubborn spirits,
They swell and grow as terrible as storms.
I know you have a gentle, noble temper,
A soul as even as a calm; pray, think, think us
Those we profess, peace-makers, friends, and servants.

Camp. Madam, you'll find it so. You wrong your virtues,
With these weak woman's fears. A noble spirit,
As yours was put into you, ever casts
Such doubts, as false coin, from it. The king loves you;
Beware you lose it not; for us, if you please
To trust us in your business, we are ready

To use our utmost studies in your service.

Cath. Do what you will, my lords; and pray, forgive me,
If I have used myself unmannerly.
You know I am a woman, lacking wit
To make a seemly answer to such persons.
Pray, do my service to his majesty:
He has my heart, yet, and shall have my prayers,
While I shall have my life. Come, reverend fathers,
Bestow your counsels on me. She now begs,
That little thought, when she set footing here,
She should have bought her dignities so dear. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

The present Scene presents us with a second object of compassion, which though it interests us after a different manner from the former, as neither being so innocent, nor suffering so unjustly; yet, shall I hazard the expression? affects us almost as much. We do not, indeed, feel our minds impressed with such a tender sensibility towards the latter, as the first; but, for the honour and dignity of human nature, let me say, that our commiseration, in the second case, arises from principles of a nobler kind; from our forgiveness of the penitent, and our compassion for his misfortunes, softened still more by our sorrow for his guilt: so that, upon the whole, the generosity of our sentiment, in one instance, nearly equals the sympathy of it, in the other.

The true supputation of the precariousness and instability of all worldly happiness and greatness, with the fit temper and resignation to bear their loss, are most pathetically and poetically set forth, in the following beautiful and affecting scene.

Wolsey, *in his disgrace.*

Farewel, a long farewel, to all my greatness!
This is the state of man — To-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes, to-morrow blossoms,

And

And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
These many summers in a sea of glory,
But far beyond my depth; my high-blown pride
At length broke under me, and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye—
I feel my heart new opened—Oh, how wretched
Is that poor man, that hangs on Princes' favours!
There is, between that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and our ruin,
More pangs and fears than war or women have;
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again.

Enter Cromwell, *standing amazed.*

Why, how now, Cromwell?

Crom. I have no power to speak, Sir.

Wolsey. What, amazed
At my misfortunes? Can thy spirit wonder
A great man should decline? Nay, *if you weep,*
I'm fallen indeed.

Crom. How does your grace?

Wolsey. Why, well—
Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.
I know myself, now; and I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities;
A still and quiet conscience—The king has cured me;
I humbly thank his grace—and from these shoulders,
These ruined pillars, out of pity taken
A load would sink a navy; too much honour.
O, 'tis a burden, Cromwell, 'tis a burden,
Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven!

Crom. I'm glad your grace has made that right use of it.

Wolsey. I hope I have. I'm able, now, methinks,
Out of a fortitude of soul I feel,
T' endure more miseries, and greater, far,

Than my weak-hearted enemies dare offer.
What news abroad?
Crom. The heaviest and the worst,
Is your displeasure with the king.
Wolsey. God bless him!
Crom. The next is, that Sir Thomas More is chosen
Lord Chancellor in your place.
Wolsey. That's somewhat sudden—
But he's a learned man. May he continue
Long in his highness' favour, and do justice,
For truth's sake, and his conscience; that his bones,
When he has run his course, and sleeps in blessings,
May have a tomb of orphans' tears wept on them!
What more?
Crom. That Cranmer is returned with welcome:
Installed Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.
Wolsey. That's news, indeed.
Crom. Last, that the lady Anne,
Whom the king hath in secrecy long married,
This day was viewed in open, as his queen,
Going to chapel; and the voice is now,
Only about her coronation.
Wolsey. There was the weight that pulled me down.
O Cromwell!
The king has gone beyond me; all my glories
In that one woman I have lost for ever.
No sun shall ever usher forth my honours,
Or gild again the noble troops that waited
Upon my smiles. Go, get thee from me, Cromwell,
I am a poor fallen man, unworthy now
To be thy lord and master. Seek the king;
That sun, I pray, may never set; I've told him
What and how true thou art; he will advance thee;
Some little memory of me will stir him,
I know his noble nature, not to let
Thy hopeful service perish too. Good Cromwell,
Neglect him not, make use now, and provide
For thine own future safety.
Crom. O, my lord,
Must I then leave you? must I needs forego
So good, so noble, and so true a master?
Bear witness, all that have not hearts of iron,
With

With what a ſorrow Cromwell leaves his lord!
The king ſhall have my ſervice; but my prayers,
For ever, and for ever, ſhall be yours.

Wolſey. Cromwell, I did not think to ſhed a tear,
In all my miſeries; but thou haſt forced me,
Out of thy honeſt truth, to play the woman.
Let's dry our eyes, and thus far hear me, Cromwell;
And when I am forgotten, as I ſhall be,
And ſleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
Of me muſt more be heard, ſay then I taught thee,
Say, Wolſey, that once rode the waves * of glory,
And ſounded all the depths and ſhoals of honour,
Found thee a way out of his wreck, to riſe in;
A ſure and ſafe one, though thy maſter miſſed it.
Mark but my fall, and that which ruined me——
Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition;
By that ſin fell the angels; how can man, then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by't?
Love thyſelf laſt, cheriſh thoſe hearts that wait † thee;
Corruption wins not more than honeſty.
Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To ſilence envious tongues. Be juſt, and fear not.
Let all the ends thou aim'ſt at be thy country's,
Thy God's, and truth's —— Then if thou falleſt, O Cromwell,
Thou falleſt a bleſſed martyr. Serve the king;
And, prithee, lead me in ---
There take an inventory of all I have,
To the laſt penny. 'Tis the king's. My robe,
And my integrity to Heaven, is all
I dare now call my own. O Cromwell, Cromwell,
" Had I but ſerved my God, with half the zeal
" I ſerved my king, he would not in mine age
" Have left me naked to mine enemies ‡."

* *Rode the waves*, inſtead of *trod the waves*, ſo altered by Warburton, to preſerve the metaphor pointed out in the two next lines, *waves*, *depth*, *ſhoals*, and *wreck*.

† *Wait*, inſtead of *hate*. Warburton. A more natural, ſenſible, and political ſenſe of the paſſage.

‡ This laſt ſentence Wolſey did really ſpeak, as recorded in hiſtory.

Crom. Good Sir, have patience.
Wolsey. So I have. Farewel
The hopes of Court! *my hopes in Heaven do dwell.*

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Our first great object, before mentioned, is here presented to us again, to charm us with that truly Christian spirit, with which, though deeply suffering under the supposed enmity of Wolsey, she not only forgives him her injuries, but listens to his praise without resentment, and even commends his honest Welch encomiast.

Kimbolton *Castle.*

Enter Catharine, *sick, and led in between* Griffith, *her Gentleman-Usher, and* Patience, *her Woman.*

Griffith. How does your grace?
Cath. O Griffith, sick to death;
My legs, like loaded branches, bow to the earth,
Willing to leave their burden. Reach a chair——
So---now methinks I feel a little ease. [*Sitting down.*
Didst thou not tell me, Griffith, as thou led'st me,
That the great child of honour, Cardinal Wolsey,
Was dead?
Griffith. Yes, madam, but I think your grace,
Out of the pain you suffered, gave no ear to it.
Cath. Prithee, good Griffith, tell me how he died—
If well, he stept before me, happily,
For my example.
Griffith. Well, the voice goes, madam.
For after the stout earl of Northumberland
Arrested him at York, and brought him forward,
As a man sorely tainted, to his answer,
He fell sick, suddenly, and grew so ill,
He could not sit his mule.
Cath. Alas, poor man!
Griffith. At last, with easy roads he came to Leicester;
Lodged in the abbey, where the reverend abbot,
With all his convent, honourably received him;

To whom he gave these words: "O, father abbot,
" An old man, broken with the storms of state,
" Is come to lay his weary bones among ye.
" Give him a little earth, for charity *."
So went to bed, where eagerly his sickness
Pursued him still; and three nights after this,
About the hour of eight, which he himself
Foretold should be his last, full of repentance,
Continual meditations, tears, and sorrows,
He gave his honours to the world again,
His blessed part to heaven, and slept in peace.

Cath. So may he rest! his faults lie gently on him!
Yet thus far, Griffith, give me leave to speak him,
And yet with charity; he was a man
Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
Himself with princes; one that by suggestion †
Tied all the kingdom. Simony was fair play—
His own opinion was his law. I'th' presence
He would say untruths, and be ever double,
Both in his words and meaning. He was never,
But where he meant to ruin, pitiful.
His promises were, as he then was, mighty;
But his performance, as he now is, nothing.
Of his own body he was ill, and gave
The clergy ill example.

Griffith. Noble madam,
Men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues
We write in water. May it please your highness
To hear me speak his good, now?

Cath. Yes, good Griffith—
I were malicious else.

Griffith. This Cardinal,
Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly
Was fashioned to much honour; from his cradle ‡.

* These words are likewise recorded of him.

† *Suggestion.* By having the freedom of the king's ear, he had an opportunity of suggesting his own schemes and politics into his mind.

‡ This line is thus pointed in the text, *Was fashioned to much honour from his cradle.* The alteration I have made in the stop, gives the best sense of the passage; for Wolsey was a remarkable scholar, even in his infancy.

He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one,
Exceeding wise, fair spoken, and persuading;
Lofty and sour to them that loved him not,
But to those men that sought him, sweet as summer.
And though he were unsatisfied in getting,
Which was a sin, yet in bestowing, madam,
He was most princely. Ever witness for him
Those twins of learning that he raised in you,
Ipswich and Oxford! One of which fell with him,
Unwilling to outlive the good he did it;
The other, though unfinished, yet so famous,
So excellent in art, and still so rising,
That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.
His overthrow heaped happiness upon him;
For then, and not till then, he felt himself,
And found the blessedness of being little—
And to add greater honours to his age,
Than man could give him, *he died fearing God.*

Cath. After my death I wish no other herald,
No other speaker of my living actions,
To keep mine honour from corruption,
But such an honest chronicler as *Griffith.*
Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,
With thy religious truth and modesty,
Now in his ashes honour. Peace be with him!
Patience *, be near me still, and set me lower.
I have not long to trouble thee. Good Griffith,
Cause the musicians play me that sad note
I named my knell; whilst I sit meditating
On that celestial harmony I go to.

[*Sad and solemn music, and a vision of Cherubim while she sleeps.*]

Here the Reader will please to advert to my remark on the vision in Scene the Fifth of the last Act of the preceding Play. This one also was meant by Shakespeare but as an allegorical representation of those beatific dreams, or reveries, which the virtuous mind, and clear conscience, may be supposed sometimes to be inspired with.

* The name of her woman.

Catharine *waking.*

Bid the music leave,
'Tis harsh and heavy to me. [*Music ceases.*

Enter Lord Capucius.

If my sight fail not,
You should be lord ambassador from the Emperor,
My royal nephew; and your name Capucius.

Capu. Madam, the same; your servant.

Cath. O, my lord,
The times and titles are now altered strangely
With me, since first you knew me. But, I pray you,
What is your pleasure with me?

Capu. Noble lady,
First mine own service to your grace; the next,
The king's request that I would visit you,
Who grieves much for your weakness, and by me
Sends you his princely commendations,
And heartily intreats you take good comfort.

Cath. O, my good lord, that comfort comes too late;
'Tis like a pardon after execution;
That gentle physic given in time, had cured me;
But now I'm past all comforts here, but prayers.
How does his highness?

Capu. Madam, in good health.

Cath. So may he ever do, and ever flourish,
When I shall dwell with worms, and my poor name
Banished the kingdom! — *Patience*, is that letter
I caused you write, yet sent away?

Patience. No, madam. [*Gives it to her.*

Cath. Sir, I most humbly pray you to deliver
This to my lord the king.

Cap. Most willing, madam.

Cath. In which I have commended to his goodness,
The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter *,
The dews of Heaven fall thick in blessings on her!
Beseeching him to give her virtuous breeding,
(She's young, and of a noble modest nature;

* Afterwards Queen Mary.

I hope ſhe will deſerve well) and a little
To love her for her mother's ſake, that loved him,
Heaven knows how dearly! My next poor petition,
Is, that his noble grace would have ſome pity
Upon my wretched women, that ſo long
Have followed both my fortunes faithfully;
Of which there is not one, I dare avow,
And now I ſhould not lie, but well deſerves,
For virtue and true beauty of the ſoul,
For honeſty and decency of carriage,
A right good huſband; let him be a Noble;
And ſure thoſe men are happy that ſhall have 'em.
The laſt is for my men; they are the pooreſt;
But poverty could never draw them from me;
That they may have their wages duly paid them,
And ſomething over, to remember me.
If Heaven had pleaſed to've given me longer life,
And abler means, we had not parted thus.
Theſe are the whole contents. And, good my lord,
By that you love the deareſt in the world,
As you wiſh Chriſtian peace to ſouls departed,
Stand theſe poor people's friend, and urge the king
To do me this laſt right.

Capu. By Heaven, I will;
Or let me loſe the faſhion of a man!

Cath. I thank you, honeſt lord. Remember me,
In all humility, unto his highneſs;
And tell him his long trouble now is paſſing
Out of this world. Tell him, in death I bleſſed him;
For ſo I will—Mine eyes grow dim. Farewel,
My Lord—Griffith, farewel—Nay, *Patience*,
You muſt not leave me yet. I muſt to bed—
Call in more women—When I'm dead, good wench,
Let me be uſed with honour—Strew me over
With maiden flowers, that all the world may know
I was a chaſte wife to my grave—Embalm me,
Then lay me forth—Although unqueened, yet like
A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me.
I can no more——

Doctor Johnſon has given us his ſentiments on this rich and noble paſſage, in the following words:

"This

" This ſcene is above any other part of Shake-
" ſpeare's Tragedies, and perhaps above any ſcene
" of any other poet, tender and pathetic; without
" gods, or furies, or poiſons, or precipices; with-
" out the help of romantic circumſtances; without
" improbable ſallies of poetical lamentation; and
" without any throes of tumultuous miſery."

"This scene is above any other part of Shakespeare's Tragedies, and perhaps above any scene of any other poet, tender and pathetic; without gods, or furies, or poisons, or precipices; without the help of romantic circumstances; without improbable allusions of poetical lamentation; and without any shows of tumultuous misery."

L E A R.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

LEAR.
ALBANY.
KENT.
GLOSTER.
EDGAR.
EDMUND.
FOOL.
Gentlemen and Attendants.

WOMEN.

GONERIL.
REGAN.
CORDELIA.

Scene lies in Britain.

L E A R.

IT may be neceſſary to many Readers to premiſe, that the Piece here under conſideration, is the Play as originally written by Shakeſpeare, leſt the bearing it in mind as altered by *Tate*, and generally acted ſo, might occaſion confuſion or miſtakes, in the following notes and obſervations.

The Critics are divided in their opinions between the original and the altered copy. Some prefer the firſt, as a more general repreſentation of human life, where fraud too often ſucceeds, and innocence ſuffers, others prefer the latter, as a more moral deſcription of what life ſhould be.

But argument in this, as in many other caſes, had better be left quite out of the queſtion; for our feelings are often a ſurer guide than our reaſon; and by this criterion I may venture to pronounce, that the reader or ſpectator will always be better pleaſed with the happy, than the unfortunate, cataſtrophe of innocence and virtue.

Beſides, if Dramatic exhibitions are deſigned, as they certainly ſhould be, to recommend virtue and diſcourage vice, there cannot remain the leaſt manner of diſpute in our minds, whether Shakeſpeare or Tate have fulfilled Horace's precept of *utile dulci* the beſt. However, if *pity* and *terror*, as the Critics ſay, are the principal objects of Tragedy, ſurely no Play that ever was written can poſſibly anſwer both theſe ends better than this performance, as it ſtands in the preſent text.

The

The Reader, I hope, will not think that I have exceeded the *line* I had prescribed to myself, in the conduct of this Work, by my hazarding the above criticism, as the subject may be, still considered as of a moral nature or tendency, and may, therefore, not improperly be confronted with the rest of my remarks upon this estimable author.

* * *

ACT I. SCENE I.

Kent *and* Glofter.

Kent. I thought the king had more affected the duke of *Albany*, than *Cornwall.*

Glofter. It did always seem so to us; but, now, in his division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for qualities are so weighed, that curiosity † in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

This is a fine description of a parent's distributive justice, in the division of a fortune between his children. Their claims are all equal in nature, and should be still preserved so in equity, except where particular usages may have obtained, or political laws have made a difference; in which cases, to observe the rule of nature would be a species of injustice.

I speak here with regard to conduct; of principle only, and not of affection; for 'tis often impossible for the most virtuous or impartial parent to refrain from loving one child better than another. An indiscriminate regard, in any case, towards two objects, though ever so much alike or estimable, is unnatural to the most impartial mind; and tho' our reason should not be able to give a preference, our feelings will.

† *Curiosity*, for *scrutiny.*

The

The oft-disputed *free will* of man may be sufficiently proved from this innate self-determination, which his mind possesses. We must make a choice, even without our being able to make a distinction. It must be an ass, indeed, that can remain in suspence, even *between two bundles of hay*. But this involuntary election we are not answerable for in ethics; we are accountable only for our manner of acting towards our children: in which their moral merits alone can justify superior marks of preference or favour.

SCENE II.

Lear. And 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths; while we
Unburdened crawl toward death.

This is a rational, a manly, and a virtuous purpose. But how few are possessed of souls *great* enough to relinquish *greatness!* Indeed, the rare examples of those who have done so, as Charles the Fifth, and some others, would not encourage one to make the experiment. But then it ought to be enquired into, whether the instances of abdication had been prompted by any of the principles above-mentioned, or no; for mere fits of devotion, or disgust, are seldom long or strong enough, to support the mind under such a dereliction.

Besides, habit is a most powerful thing; and persons used to occupation of any kind, are apt to feel an irksome vacuity and weariness in themselves, with an oppressive tediousness of time lying on their hands, whenever they cease from employment. This has been the confession of all the merchants, lawyers, farmers, and physicians, I have ever known or heard of, who had retired from their professions, or quitted their ordinary scenes of action, late in life. Whenever, therefore, such an experiment

is

is attempted, it ſhould ariſe from a *principle*, not from a *preference*; becauſe the choice muſt be ventured upon, before the compariſon can be tried.

In the ſame Scene, when Lear requires his three daughters to declare the ſeveral portions of their love and reſpect towards him, the eldeſt addreſſes herſelf to him thus:

Goneril. Sir,
I love you more than words can wield the matter,
Dearer than eye-ſight, ſpace, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No leſs than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and ſpeech unable,
Beyond all manner of ſo much I love you.

Upon this ſpeech, the youngeſt daughter ſays to herſelf, aſide,

What ſhall Cordelia do? Love, and be ſilent.

After Goneril has had her portion marked out, the ſecond ſteps forward, in order to earn her's.

Regan. I'm made of that ſelf-metal as my ſiſter,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart,
I find ſhe names my very deed of love,
Only ſhe comes too ſhort; that I profeſs
Myſelf an enemy to all other joys,
Which the moſt precious ſquare of ſenſe poſſeſſes,
And find I am alone felicitate,
In your dear highneſs love.

Here the ſincere and unprofeſſing Cordelia whiſpers to herſelf again:

Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not ſo, ſince I am ſure my love's
More ponderous than my tongue.

When Lear has endowed Regan alſo, he next proceeds to challenge Cordelia upon the ſame queſtion;

tion; asking her what she has to say, to shew her love equal to her sisters; her only answer is,

Nothing, my lord.

But, indeed, what was there left for her to say, after such hyperbolical professions as had been just made before her? However, I dare pronounce, that any reader, who is at all acquainted with human nature, without looking any further into the story, beyond the present Scene, must have already determined the point in his own mind, which of the daughters' duties or affections were most to be relied upon.

No passion can either bear or justify exaggeration, but love alone. There the extravagance of transport, and the enthusiasm of devotement, prove the *luxuriance* of the soil; but, in every other instance, betray the *sterility* of it. There is, in reality, no other passion in the human breast, but love. All other affections, such as avarice, duty, envy, revenge, or ambition, arise from some foreign sentiment, are founded on principle, or instigated by vice or pride. These we may be educated, tempted, or provoked to; but the former is a spontaneous and involuntary impulse of the soul, a certain attractive force, that can neither be dictated to us by moral, nor restrained by document.

" First bid physicians preach our veins to temper,
" And with an argument new set a pulse,
" Then think of reasoning into love."

The REVENGE.

SCENE VI.

Edmund *solus*.

Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound; wherefore should I

Stand

Stand in the plague * of cuſtom, and permit
The courteſy † of nations to deprive me?

Thus do all profligates, who deſerve to be the outcaſts of ſociety, betake themſelves to the aſylum of Nature. Whenever the laws of God or man oppoſe their vices, they immediately adopt her for their deity and their legiſlator; whom they cannot fail to find a moſt indulgent patroneſs, as they are ſure to interpret all their own wills and paſſions to be her unerring dictates.

Lucretius, the expoſitor of Epicurus, in his unphiloſophic Poem on the Nature of Things, addreſſes himſelf to the ſame goddeſs, under the appellation of *Venus*, whom he makes to precede and ſuperſede the gods, repreſenting them as a ſet of lethargic beings of her creation, and leaving them to doze away their immortalities, wrapt up in their empyreal *Pantheon*.

The pride of man is amazing! Rather than acknowledge any Intelligence ſuperior to themſelves, they chuſe to refer the manifeſt wiſdom and power of the Deity to blind chance, and inert matter alone!

"And call God's providence a lucky hit." POPE.

And yet this can hardly be deemed impious, becauſe 'tis ſo miſerably ſtupid.

SCENE VII.

Shakeſpeare, as I have had opportunities of obſerving before, takes frequent occaſions of repreſenting the horrid condition of a nation under the

* The Commentators are not agreed upon the ſenſe of this word, in the place where it is here uſed; but I think that the meaning of it would be ſufficiently clear, if it was exchanged for *tyranny*.

† By *courteſy* is meant certain *uſages* ſo ſtiled in the common law of England.

inflicion

infliction of a civil war. His descriptions deserve to be collected together in one chapter, as a document both to prince and people; for the warning is equally necessary to each; as, whatever may be the final event, they must be alike sufferers, under such a calamity. For, in such a conflict, those are likely to gain most, who have the least to lose. These reflections refer to the following passage in this Scene.

Glofter. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide. In cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond crack'd 'twixt son and father. We have seen the best of our time. Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves.

SCENE VIII.

The impious and unphilosophic method that people are too generally apt to apply toward the lightening of their consciences, and relieving their miseries, by imputing their vices and misfortunes to fate, necessity, or the harmless stars presiding at their births, instead of their own wickedness or indiscretions, is well satirized and exposed in the following speech, though it has not, I think, been put into a proper mouth to speak.

Edmund. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our own disasters the sun, the moon, and stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools, by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treacherous, by spherical predominance; drunkards, lyars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition on the change of a star!

SCENE

SCENE XII.

Kent here gives a character of a man, in recommending his own services to Lear:

I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment *; and to fight when I cannot chuse †.

SCENE XIII.

The following passage comes in here very properly, after the foregoing one: as it gives good and prudent advice for our conduct in life.

Fool. Have more than thou sheweſt,
Speak less than thou knoweſt;
Lend less than thou oweſt ‡,
Ride more than thou goeſt:
Learn more than thou troweſt §;
Set less than thou throweſt ‖;
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep within door;
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score ¶.

These maxims should not lose their credit or effect, on account of the character which utters them; for Shakespeare's fools are not those of *modern times*, but speak a great deal of good sense throughout all his Plays. Besides, these sort of privileged persons, stiled formerly *king's jesters*, were usually men of wit and parts, a sort of free speakers, who were indulged in a liberty of telling

* To respect the laws.

† Neither forward to begin, nor backward to end a fray.

‡ *To owe*, in old English, is to own or possess.

§ To *trow* is to *believe*. The line means, not to embrace all opinions, because delivered under the sanction of philosophy or learning.

‖ That is, never set equal to the stake you throw for.

¶ A phrase for improving one's capital.

truths,

truths, or making reflections on their master's conduct, without being reprehended or restrained. And as they were the only courtiers who were permitted such a licence, they deserved more properly to be deemed the *king's friends*, than to have been stigmatized by either of the other denominations.

SCENE XV.

The curses which the justly provoked father denounces here, against his unnatural daughters, are so very horrid and shocking to humanity, that I shall not offend my Reader by quoting them; tho' Shakespeare, I am convinced, supplied them merely in order to raise an abhorrence in his audience, against two of the greatest crimes in the black list of deadly sins, namely, ingratitude and undutifulness; and to shew, as the injured parent most emphatically expresses it, in the same passage,

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is,
To have a thankless child!

ACT II. SCENE VI.

In this same Scene, and upon account of Kent's warmth and impatience of speech and temper, though still under the disguise of an hireling attendant on Lear, there is a very good description given of such a person as he appears to be; a character frequently to be met with in life, though the speaker is mistaken in the application of it to the honest Duke, who might very properly be said, in the sense of the expression above given, to have been the *King's friend*.

Cornwal. This is some fellow,
Who having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A sawcy roughness; and constrains the garb,
Quite from his nature. He can't flatter, he!
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth;
And they will take it so—If not, he's plain—

These

These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends,
Than twenty silly ducking observants,
That stretch their duties nicely.

SCENE X.

When Gloster makes an apology to Lear, here, for not pressing his son, the duke of Cornwal, a second time, to an interview with him, on account of the *fiery quality* of the Duke, as also having brought an answer from him that he was not well, the injured Monarch resents it thus:

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwal—The dear father
Would with his daughter speak—commands her service—
Are they informed of this? My breath and blood!
Fiery? The fiery duke? Tell the hot duke, that—
[Gloster offers to go.
No, but not yet—he is not well—
Infirmity doth still neglect all office,
Whereto our health is bound; we're not ourselves,
When nature, being oppreſt, commands the mind
To suffer with the body——I'll forbear;
And am fall'n out with my more headier will,
To take the indisposed and sickly fit,
For the sound man.

The surprize and resentment expressed in the first part of the above speech, is just and natural; but the pause of recollection which afterwards abates his anger, is extremely fine, both in the reasonableness of the reflection, and the humanity of the sentiment.

This beautiful passage, with many others of the same tender kind, which follow in the course of developing Lear's character, and which I shall occasionally refer back from to this note, render this unhappy man a real object both of commiseration

tion and esteem, notwithstanding the weakness, passion, and injustice he has so fully exposed in the beginning of this Play.

No writer that ever lived was capable of drawing a mixed character, equal to Shakespeare; for no one has ever seemed to have dived so deep into Nature, as himself.—Frequent instances of this admirable talent in him may be selected from his Works. Most other authors, in their descriptions of men, present us either with *a flowery mead*, or *a savage desart*; but the *demesne* of human nature, which includes both the fruitful field and the barren waste, within one inclosure, is rarely delineated by common writers.

SCENE XII.

Lear *to* Goneril, *upon her abridging his train.*

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad;
I will not trouble thee—My child, farewel;
We'll no more meet, no more see one another.
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine; thou art a bile,
A plague-sore, or imbossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it;
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
Mend when thou canst—Be better, at thy leisure.
I can be patient.

Here poor Lear seems to make some kind of amends for his former violence; for though the provocation continues still the same, nay rather, indeed, is increased by the repetition of it, yet he contents himself, in this place, with barely upbraiding and reviling the offender, but refrains from adding curses to his reproaches.

Human nature is equally discernible in both these instances. The suddenness of his rage, on the first injury, might have wrested those anathemas from him, involuntarily; but before the second occasion presented itself, his fury had had time to abate, and he then restrains his speech within the bounds of a justifiable resentment.

ACT III. SCENE II.

The Fool. Here's a night, that pities neither wise men, nor fools.

He must be very ignorant of human life, who does not know, that as *the sun shines equally on the just and on the unjust*, so sickness, perils, and afflictions are alike the *casual* portion of the good and bad, the wise and foolish. But then all this happens without the least manner of imputation upon Providence — For this world is not a state of *retribution* — And, in reality, it would be a most uncomfortable reflection, if it was; for then we could have no reason to presume a fond and flattering hope upon a better.

SCENE III.

Lear, *in the midst of thunder and lightning.*

Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemy now—Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipt of justice. Hide thee, thou bloody hand,
Thou perjure, and thou simular of virtue,
That art incestuous. Caitiff, shake to pieces,
That under covert and convenient seeming,
Hath practised on man's life! Close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and ask
These dreadful summoners grace.

Can there be a finer paſſage, or a more admonitory one, than this? If, upon all our dangers or calamities, we ſhould enter thus into a ſtrict ſelf-examination of our conſciences and conduct, it might naturally produce a moſt ſalutary effect on our future lives; as, on ſuch a ſcrutiny we ſhould, perhaps, oftener find our misfortunes to be, not our *diſeaſes*, but our *medicines*; and from thence be brought to ſay, with the Pſalmiſt, *Happy has it been for me, that I have been afflicted!*

In the ſame Scene, Lear, ſpeaking to the Fool, who was appointed to ſhew him the way to Edgar's hovel, where he might be able to ſhelter himſelf from the ſtorm, ſays,

Where is the ſtraw, my fellow?
The art of our neceſſities is ſtrange,
That can make vile things precious.

The truth of this obſervation is too obvious from experience, to need being inſiſted on; but I ſhall here add the remainder of the ſpeech, as it may be referred to, and helps to juſtify the ſecond paragraph of my remark on the Tenth Scene above, in the former Act.

Lear. Come, your hovel —
Poor fool and knave, *I've one part in my heart,*
That's ſorry yet for thee.

SCENE V.

When they have arrived at the hovel, Lear changes his purpoſe, on account of a reaſon he afterwards gives, regarding the diſtracted ſtate of his mind; and being preſſed by Kent, who juſt then joins him, to take ſhelter from the outrage of the night, he cries,

Let me alone.

And being intreated, a ſecond time, he repeats the ſame anſwer. But upon being further urged by the kind earneſtneſs of his poor ſervant, which Kent ſtill preſerves the appearance of, he then exclaims, with emotion,

Wilt break my heart?

How truly affecting is this ſhort expoſtulation, if quickly conceived? It was not the importunity of Kent, that he meant to obſerve upon; the expreſſion needed not to have been ſo tender, to have marked ſuch an offence: Princes are apt to reſent the controulment of their wills or actions, in a ſeverer ſtile. But it was the inſtantaneous compariſon between the barbarity of his own daughters, which had reduced him to ſuch a wretched condition, and the humanity of a common alien, kindly preſſing him to a ſhelter from it, that ſo ſuddenly ſtruck and affected his mind, at that moment—This thought, indeed, might well be ſaid to *break his heart*; and to have added a ſingle word more, to explain this ſentiment, would have marred the whole beauty of the paſſage.

Upon Kent's ſtill continuing his entreaty, he ſtill refuſes to comply, but reaſons with him thus:

Thou think'ſt 'tis much that this contentious ſtorm
Invades us to the ſkin—So 'tis to thee—
But where the greater malady is fixt,
The leſſer is ſcarce felt—Thou'dſt ſhun a bear;
But if thy flight lay toward the roaring ſea,
Thou'dſt meet the bear i' th' mouth. When the mind's free,
The body's delicate—The tempeſt in my mind
Doth from my ſenſes take all feeling elſe,
Save what beats there.

This is the true nature of the human mind; the greater evil always ſwallowing up the leſſer, as the rod of Moſes did the other ſerpents. And in great calamities,

calamities, I do not know but it might, perhaps, be an advantage to have ſome other ills of an inferior nature to combat with, at the ſame time; for, as Lear ſays, juſt after, as his reaſon for refuſing to take ſhelter,

This tempeſt will not give me leave to ponder,
On things would hurt me more.

When he conſents, at laſt, to enter the hut, he preſſes his two attendants to go in firſt, ſaying,

I'll pray, and then I'll ſleep.

Upon which he immediately falls into the following beautiful apoſtrophe:

You houſeleſs poverty,
Poor naked wretches, wherefoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitileſs ſtorm,
How ſhall your houſeleſs heads and unfed ſides,
Your looped and windowed raggedneſs defend you
From ſeaſons ſuch as theſe? *O, I have ta'en*
Too little care of this—Take phyſic, Pomp;
Expoſe thyſelf to feel what wretches feel,
That thou may'ſt ſhake the ſuperflux to them,
And ſhew the Heavens more juſt!

Here alſo, I ſhall beg leave to refer the Reader back to the ſecond paragraph of my remark on the Tenth Scene of the Second Act.

This puts me in mind of two good lines, on the ſame ſubject, which I met with in a very pretty little moral Poem, lately publiſhed *.

"Aſk what we have to give—it is not ours;
"*Heaven has but lent it us to make it yours.*"

SCENE IX.

Edgar. When we our betters ſee bearing our woes,
We ſcarcely think our miſeries our foes;

* By Miſs More, of Briſtol.

Who alone suffers, suffers most i' th' mind,
Leaving free things, and happy shows behind †.
But then the mind much suff'rance does o'erskip,
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend, makes the king bow.

He utters this reflection, upon considering the comparative distresses to which Lear had been reduced; and his observation being drawn both from Nature and the immediate object then before him, has a double beauty and force in this place, and should be remembered and applied, in all such cases. Let us compare our own ills with those of others, especially of persons, who, from their superior rank and fortune, may be supposed to be better defended from injury than ourselves, and it may conduce to render our minds often more acquiescent in our own sufferings.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Edgar. Yet better thus, and known to be contemned,
Than still contemned, and flattered. To be worst,
The lowest, most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance; lives not in fear—
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter.

Shakespeare gives us, here, a poetical paraphrase on the flattering old English proverb, that *when things are at the worst, they'll mend.* He has commenced the speech with a noble and liberal sentiment, and concludes it with a reflection drawn from the adage, in these lines:

World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us wait * thee,
Life would not yield to age.

† States of life free from distress, and likely to continue so.
* *Wait*, instead of *hate*. Theobald.

That

That is, If the vicissitudes of life did not suffer us to amuse our sufferings still with hope, few would have patience enough to wait till old age should bring its slow relief to all our cares.

* * *

Enter Gloster *blind, and led by an old Man.*

Old Man. You cannot see your way.

Gloster. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes—
I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen
Our maims † secure us; and our mere defects
Prove our commodities.

This is a truth often verified in life, but the most general instances are, that women and children are safer from harms, than men are—They hazard less, from being less able to achieve.

Gloster. As flies to wanton boys, are we to the Gods;
They kill us, for their sport.

This is a most impious and unphilosophic reflection. Poor Gloster seems, by this expression, to have been rather soured, than softened, by his misfortunes; which his attempted suicide afterwards proves still further. Such a sentiment must certainly surprize us, in Shakespeare, when uttered by a person of so good a character as Gloster—It could not so offend, in the mouth of Edmund, tho' better not spoken at all.

* * *

Gloster, *when he has given his purse to the guide.*

Heavens deal so still!
Let the superfluous ‡ and lust-dieted man,
That braves ‖ your ordinance, that will not see,
Because he does not feel, feel your power quickly:

† *Maims*, instead of *mean*. Johnson.
‡ *Superfluous*, for *superabundant*.
‖ *Braves*, instead of *slaves*. Warburton.

So diſtribution ſhould undo exceſs,
And each man have enough.

Lear had before given us the ſame moral, as taken notice of in my remark on the Fifth Scene of the former Act; but I have quoted this paſſage, notwithſtanding, as containing a ſentiment which cannot be too often inculcated. Offer it as a *propoſition*, and all the world will agree with you in the *precept*; but make it a *propoſal*, and how few will join iſſue in the *practice!*

SCENE II.

Albany *and* Goneril.

When this good Duke is reproaching his wife, here, for the barbarous treatment ſhe had given her father, ſhe interrupts him with,

No more—'Tis fooliſh.

To which he replies, very juſtly,

Wiſdom and goodneſs to the vile ſeem vile;
Filths ſavour but themſelves. . . . . .

It is, indeed, too much the horrid nature of vice and folly, not only to rejoice in its own wickedneſs and weakneſs, but, as Albany ſays, to depreciate all wiſdom and goodneſs in others. The Moor would have all faces black.

He ſays, further on in the ſame ſpeech,

If that the Heavens do not their viſible ſpirits
Send quickly down to tame theſe vile offences,
Humanity muſt perforce prey on itſelf,
Like monſters of the deep.

This ſentiment was as emphatically expreſſed, before, on the cloſe of the laſt Scene of the former Act, by two mean attendants who were witneſſes to the cruelties exerciſed by Cornwal and Regan, on

on Gloster's eyes; but I forbore to quote it, till I came to this passage.

Manent *two Servants.*

1st Serv. I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.
2d Serv. If she live long,
And, in the end, meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

But to return again to the Scene with Albany and Goneril.

She replies to his humane remonstrances and just reproaches, in these words:

Milk-livered man!
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not knowest,
Fools do those villains pity, who are punished
Ere they have done their mischief.

On which Albany exclaims,

See thyself, devil!
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend,
So horrid as in woman *.

What she means by the last lines is, that it is necessary to guard against foreseen evils, as well as to defend against those that press us; but fools being too short-sighted to see the prevention in the punishment, are apt to bewail the sufferer.

SCENE III.

Kent *and a* Gentleman.

The honest old *king's friend* having sent off this person with dispatches to Cordelia, then Queen of

* Diabolical qualities appear not so horrid in the Devil, to whom they properly belong, as in woman, to whom they are unnatural. Warburton.

France, importing the miſerable ſituation of her father, queſtions him here, on his return, what kind of effect the peruſal of his letter had upon her; and nothing, ſurely, can be more beautiful, nor more intereſting, than the deſcription he gives of that fine ſtruggle between patience and ſorrow, which ſhe manifeſted upon this occaſion; with the delicacy and decency of her quick retiring from view, when ſhe found her grief beginning to maſter her philoſophic ſeemings.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonſtration of grief?

Gent. Ay, Sir, ſhe took them, read them in my preſence,
And now and then an ample tear trilled down
Her delicate cheek; it ſeemed ſhe was a queen
Over her paſſion, which, moſt rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it moved her—

Gent. Not to a rage. Patience and ſorrow ſtrove
Who ſhould expreſs her goodlieſt; you have ſeen
Sun-ſhine and rain, at once—Her ſmiles and tears
Were like a wetter May. Thoſe happy ſmiles
That played on her ripe lip, ſeemed not to know
What gueſts were in her eyes, which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropt—In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity moſt beloved,
If all could ſo become it *.

Kent. Made ſhe no verbal queſtion?

Gent. Yes, once or twice, ſhe heaved the name of Father
Pantingly forth, as if it preſs'd her heart.
Cried ſiſters! ſiſters! ſhame of ladies! ſiſters!
Kent! father! ſiſters! What? i' th' ſtorm? i' th' night?
Let pity ne'er believe it!—There ſhe ſhook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,

* Part of the above deſcription reſembles what Viola ſays, in Twelfth-Night:

She ſat, like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief.

And,

And, clamour-motioned †, then away ſhe ſtarted,
To deal with grief alone.

Theobald hints that Shakeſpeare had borrowed this fine picture of Cordelia's grief, from Joſeph, *in Holy Writ*, who, being no longer able to reſtrain his affections, ordered his retinue from his preſence, and then wept aloud.

SCENE VII.

The adulation and hyperbolical flattery which princes are too generally *abuſed* by, is well expoſed here:

Lear. They flattered me like a dog, and told me, I had white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were there—To ſay ay, and no, to every thing that I ſaid—Ay and no too, was no good divinity—When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found them, there I ſmelt them out. Go to, they are not men of their words—They told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.

The great Canute took a method of reproving the ſycophants of his court, who affected to treat him as a God, by ſtanding on the beach till the ſea ſurrounded him, notwithſtanding his ſtern beheſt to the tide to arreſt its courſe.

SCENE VIII.

A perſon, here, who has been witneſs to one of the Scenes of Lear's madneſs, makes this very natural reflection:

A ſight moſt pitiful, in the meaneſt wretch,
Paſt ſpeaking of in a king.

Strict philoſophy, perhaps, may not admit of ſuch a diſtinction in men, merely from the diffe-

† *Motioned*, inſtead of *moiſtened*. Warburton.

rence

rence of outward circumſtances alone; but the habits and opinions of the world will always operate both on our ſentiments and feelings, on a compariſon, to the full extent of the maxim here laid down.

Beſides, indeed, without having the leaſt manner of reſpect to perſons, that ſuperior degree of calamity which can be capable of piercing through the ſtronger ſhields of ſtation, opulence and power, before it can inflict its arrows upon princes, muſt, doubtleſs, render them ſtill greater objects of commiſeration, than thoſe whoſe condition in life may be ſuppoſed to lye more open to the ordinary aſſails of misfortune. See my Remark upon the laſt Scene of the former Act.

Gloſter ſeems to have the ſame ſenſe of things, when in the following Scene he expreſſes a ſurprize, that, becauſe Lear is diſordered in his ſenſes, he ſhould ſtill be able to retain his own: though, indeed, he makes but a ſad deduction from the reflection.

The king is mad; how ſtiff is my vile ſenſe,
That I ſtand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge ſorrows. Better I were diſtract;
So much my thoughts be ſevered from my griefs,
And woes, by wrong imagination, loſe
The knowledge of themſelves.

SCENE IX.

When Edgar, by killing of Goneril's ſteward, gets poſſeſſion of the diſpatches he was carrying to the enemy, he takes a reſolution to open them; which he prefaces thus:

By your leave, gentle wax and manners—Blame us not—
To know our enemies minds we rip their hearts—
Their papers are more lawful.

But,

But, however certain *reasons of state* may possibly render such an action necessary, there is something in it, notwithstanding, at which the liberal and ingenuous mind naturally revolts.— "Beyond the fixed and settled rules, &c."— The comparison he makes, indeed, is certainly strong, in favour of the lesser evil, regarding merely the simple position of the question; but then he should have restrained himself to the saying the latter was more *reasonable* or *humane*, than have pronounced it to be more *lawful*. For it is this very circumstance, the *legality* of the former act, which marks the difference between them; and which, though severe, yet being founded on the maxims of the *Civil-Law*, that "no "person shall be convict of a crime, without "his own confession *," appears to be more justifiable, in the constitution of things, than even a milder act, which has no such principle to support it; nay, which rather militates, as in this case it apparently does, against that very maxim; by obtaining a surreptitious proof of guilt, *without confession*; besides the compassing it, by an ungenerous baseness.

SCENE X.

The following speech is replete with filial tenderness, as well as excess (if that can possibly be) of humanity.

Cordelia, *speaking to her father, while he sleeps.*

Had you not been their father†, these white flakes
Did challenge pity of them. Was this a face
To be exposed against the warring winds?

* Shaftesbury makes *ridicule*, and the Civil Law, as wisely, makes *torture*, the test of Truth.

† That is, had you been an alien, or a stranger.

To

To ſtand againſt the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the moſt terrible and nimble ſtroke
Of quick croſs lightning? To watch, poor *Perdu*,
With this thin helm? *My very enemy's dog,*
Though he had bit me, ſhould have ſtood that night
Againſt my fire. And waſt thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with ſwine and rogues forlorn
In ſhort and muſty ſtraw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits, at once,
Had not concluded.

ACT V. SCENE I.

There is a noble and a juſt maxim delivered in the following ſpeech, though not, indeed, very conſonant with the profligate notions of ancient barbariſm, commonly called heroiſm.

Albany *to* Edmund.

Sir, this I hear, the king is come to his daughter †,
With other whom the rigour of our ſtate
Forced to cry out. *Where I could not be honeſt,*
I never yet was valiant.

SCENE V.

When Lear and Cordelia are brought in priſoners, the latter aſks if they may not be permitted to a conference with *theſe daughters and theſe ſiſters*, in hopes of working on their compaſſion to ſet them free—To which Lear anſwers, with that mixture of extravagance and ſound ſenſe, which ſo obviouſly run through the whole of his delirium,

No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to priſon;
We two alone will ſing, like birds i' th' cage.
When thou doſt aſk me bleſſing, I'll kneel down,
And aſk of thee forgiveneſs; ſo we'll live,
And pray, and ſing, and tell old tales, and laugh

† To Cordelia.

At

At gilded butterflies; and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news, and we'll talk with them, too,
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;
And take upon's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies. And we'll wear out,
In a walled prison, packs and sets* of great ones,
That ebb and flow by th' moon.

In the above speech, besides the wildness of the first part, which is, however, extremely affecting, (for passion moves us more than reason) there is, here, as in all this poor king's rhapsodies, as hinted before, *a document in madness*, which excellently describes the character of the old *Quid Nunc's*, so well ridiculed in the Spectator; indeed of the Coffeehouse Politicians of all times; and which well rebukes the idle presumption of those vain ignorants, who pretend to canvass the mysteries of state, and investigate the arcana of government, as if they were of a superior order of intelligence, without any knowledge in the science of civil polity, or the least capacity for the arts of empire.

Such intermeddlers, by working themselves in to be the demagogues of the populace, have often perplexed councils, and, sometimes, overthrown kingdoms. For, as it is the *Few* who govern, in all states, their strength must necessarily be founded more in *authority*, than *force*; and when once rule or royalty have been rendered the objects of general diffidence or contempt, what curb is there left to restrain the *Many*?

"Slaves and fools, then,
"Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,
"And minister in their steads." TIMON.

* *Sets*, instead of *sects*. Johnson.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

A respect for regality, supported by a just claim, is ever so strongly impressed in the general bosom of a people, that rebels never think they can sufficiently secure themselves against it. From whence the common saying, that *princes seldom remove from a prison, but to a grave.* This thought is well expressed in the following speech:

Edmund *to* Albany, *who commands him to deliver up his prisoners.*

Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention, and appointed guard;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosoms on his side,
And turn our impreſt lances in our eyes,
Which do command them.

SCENE VIII.

After Edgar has wounded and vanquished Edmund, he makes the following reflection:

The gods are just, and of our *several** vices
Make instruments to scourge us.

There have been such frequent instances in life, of the above observation, that those vices which we have most indulged ourselves in, have become the peculiar means of our chastisement, that it might naturally lead us into a belief, that this may, possibly, be one, among the many secret ways of Providence, with its creatures.

* I have ventured to make a slight alteration here; because the word *pleasant*, in the Text, had no relation to the speech, as far as I have quoted it; besides, that the expression I have substituted, renders the maxim more general.

At

At leaſt, the *adaptions* have often been ſo very extraordinary and remarkable, that it might tempt one to ſuppoſe there muſt have been ſomething more than the common caſualty or contingency of events, in ſuch caſes. I could wiſh, however, for the ſake of morals, to encourage the perſuaſion, and render it univer:al.

* * *

Albany, Edgar *and* Edmund.

Edgar, *giving an account of his laſt interview with his father.*

Never, O fault, revealed myſelf to him,
Until ſome half hour paſt; when I was armed,
Not ſure, though hoping of this good ſucceſs,
I aſked his bleſſing, and from firſt to laſt,
Told him my pilgrimage. But his flawed heart,
Alack, too weak the conflict to ſupport.
'Twixt two extremes of paſſion, joy and grief,
Burſt ſmilingly.

Edmund. Speak you on,
You look as you had ſomething more to ſay.

Albany. If there be more, more woeful, hold it in;
For I am almoſt ready to diſſolve,
Hearing of this.

Edgar. This would have ſeemed a period. But ſuch
As love to amplify another's ſorrow,
To much would add much more,
And top extremity *!

The difference of natures, between Albany, a man of virtue, and, conſequently, of a compaſſionate diſpoſition, and Edmund, a vicious perſon, and, of courſe, of blunted feelings, is well

* The Text has been altered here by Doctor Warburton, much to the advantage of its ſenſe and perſpicuity.

marked

marked in the above dialogue. The latter would have the ſad ſtory continued, but the former intreated to hear no more of it. And Edgar has well obſerved upon theſe oppoſed characters, in the preface he makes to the ſecond part of his tale.

This would have ſeemed a period, &c.

SCENE IX.

The ſame Albany, however, immediately after, upon ſeeing the dead bodies of Goneril and Regan brought in, ſays,

This judgment of the Heavens that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity.

Here a haſty Reader might be apt to think, that the good Duke had forfeited his character for humanity, a little, in this inſtance; but there is ſomething inimitably juſt and fine in the paſſage. We certainly feel ourſelves differently affected towards the wretched in the common lot of life, and thoſe who ſeem to be diſtinguiſhed as the more immediate objects of divine chaſtiſement. Our minds, in the latter caſe, become impreſſed with a ſort of pious awe, which reſtrains our compaſſion, leſt the too free indulgence of it might ſeem to arraign the juſtice of Providence.

This is a trait of human nature, ſo very little obvious to common capacities, that though all muſt have been ſenſible of the feeling, ſo few have had penetration enough to inveſtigate the cauſe, that I dare ſay many have been aſhamed to confeſs it, as imputing it to a deficiency of tenderneſs in their own hearts.

SCENE

SCENE X.

This Play concludes with the following moſt excellent moral:

Albany. All friends ſhall taſte
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deſervings.

It were a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed, that the examples of this precept were more numerous in the world, than they are.—'Tis a peculiar reproach to the character which utters it, when they are not. *Albany was a king*. See my laſt reflection upon Henry the Fifth.

TIMON.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

TIMON.
ALCIBIADES.
APEMANTUS.
VENTIDIUS.
LUCULLUS.
LUCIUS.
SEMPRONIUS.
SENATORS.
POET.
PAINTER.
FLAVIUS.
OLD ATHENIAN.
STRANGER.
SERVANTS.

WOMEN.

NONE.

TIMON.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Poet. WHEN we for recompence have praiſed the vile,
It ſtains the glory in that happy verſe,
Which amply ſings the good.

This remark is extremely juſt; that the flattery which paraſites or needy clients are apt indiſcriminately to ſquander upon their patrons, leſſens the value of praiſe to the deſerving few. We will admit a lover to compliment a miſtreſs beyond her merits, becauſe he may be ſuppoſed, from the blindneſs of his paſſion, not to intend any exaggeration; as has been already taken notice of, on a paſſage in the preceding Play *. But, in every other ſuch caſe, we ſin with our eyes open; and thereby offend againſt that great and univerſal moral, which ought to be the principal rule both of our words, our thoughts, and our actions—namely, *Truth*.

In the continuance of the ſame Scene, in a dialogue between the Poet and a Painter, the former ſketches out the plan of a moral or didactic Poem he was then compoſing, for the warning and inſtruction of his great patron, the Lord Timon; in which there is much merit, both in the deſign and

* See Lear, Act I. Scene II. The laſt remark on Cordelia's anſwer.

con-

contrivance of the piece, as well as in the description of it.

Poet. I have, in this rough work, shaped out a man,
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
With ampleſt entertainment. My free drift
Halts not particularly *, but moves itſelf
In a wide ſea of wax †; no levelled malice ‡
Infects one comma in the courſe I hold,
But darts § an eagle-flight, bold and forth on,
Leaving no tract ‖ behind. . . . .
You ſee how all conditions, how all minds,
As well of glib and ſlippery natures ¶, as
Of grave and auſtere quality, tender down
Their ſervice to lord Timon; his large fortune,
Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
All ſorts of hearts; yea, from the glaſs-faced flatterer **
To Apemantus, that few things loves better,
Than to abhor himſelf; even he drops down
The knee before him, and returns in peace,
More rich in Timon's nod. . . . . .
I have, then, on a high and pleaſant hill,
Feigned Fortune to be throned. The baſe o' th' mount
Is ranked †† with all deſerts, all kind of natures,
That labour on the boſom of this ſphere,
To propagate their ſtates ‡‡—Amongſt them all,
Whoſe eyes are on this ſovereign lady fixed,

* *Halts not particularly*, deſigns no particular character. John[illegible]

† This alludes to the antient manner of writing, with an iron ſtile on waxen tablets. Hanmer.

‡ The ſenſe of this expreſſion has been already explained, in Note *, above.

§ I have changed the word *flies*, to *darts*, to avoid the tautology between the verb and the noun *flight*; beſides that I think the expreſſion is more emphatic of the image.

‖ *Tract*, Shakeſpeare takes the liberty of uſing this word for *track*.

¶ *Natures*, inſtead of *creatures*. Hanmer.

** *Glaſs-faced flatterer*; who receive their impreſſions from their patron.

†† *Ranked*, for *ranged*, or more properly *arranged*.

‡‡ To mend their conditions, or improve their fortunes.

On

One do I personate of Timon's frame,
Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her,
Whose present grace to present slaves and servants
Translates his rivals. . . . . .
All those which were his fellows but of late,
Some better than his value, on the moment,
Follow his strides; his lobbies fill with 'tendance;
Rain sacrificial whisperings * in his ear;
Make sacred even his stirrup; and through him
Drink the free air †.
When Fortune, in her shift and change of mood,
Spurns down her late beloved; all his dependants,
Which laboured after to the mountain's top,
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

Painter. 'Tis common.
A thousand moral paintings I can shew,
That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune,
More pregnantly than words—Yet you do well
To shew lord Timon that mean eyes have seen
The foot above the head.

The first speech in the above dialogue, well describes the general and truly moral satire, and properly distinguishes it from the bastard, or invidious kind of personal invective, styled the libel or lampoon:

My free drift
Halts not *particularly*, &c.

SCENE II.

Timon, upon hearing of his friend Ventidius being thrown into a gaol, says to the messenger,

Commend me to him, I will send his ransom;
And being enfranchised bid him come to me.

* *Sacrificial whisperings*, offer up their prayers, and vow gifts to his altar, as if he was a God. Shakespeare says, in Antony and Cleopatra, of the Queen's women, *They make their hends adorings.*

† Seem only to live upon his breath.

Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
But to support him after.

The last lines contain a noble sentiment of friendship, charity, and generosity—It has merit enough in itself, to stand alone; but would have double the effect on an hearer, if pronounced by a person of a more prudent and provident character.

This thought is beautifully expressed, in an old Elegy written on the good bishop Boulter, who died Primate of Ireland, some years ago:

——— "He thought it mean,
"Only to help the poor to beg again."

Timon says, soon after, in the same dialogue,

This gentleman of mine hath served me long,
To build his fortune I will strain a little,
For 'tis a bond in men.

And again, in Scene V. (for I chuse to collect like sentiments under the same head) he says to Ventidius, who comes to thank him for his friendship, and to repay the debt,

You mistake my love;
I gave it freely, ever; *and there's none*
Can truly say he gives, if he receives.

But to return to our former Scene — When Timon asks the old Athenian whether his daughter likes the young man that courts her, he replies,

She is young and apt—
Our own precedent passions do instruct us,
What levity's in youth.

This is a sensible and philosophic reflection, and should be more attended to, than it generally is: for there are no persons fit to educate, to guide, or instruct young people, but those who have not forgotten

gotten their own youth. Parents and grand-parents are apt, too often, to require their children and grand-children ſhould benefit of their earned knowledge and long experience, and ſo go on from thence, improving ſtill in ſenſe and virtue. It would be a happy thing, indeed, if we could put morals on the foot of ſcience, which is thus progreſſive; but they muſt be very ignorant of human nature, who expect it.

"Old folks," as an ingenious modern author expreſſes it, "would have young ones as *wiſe* as "themſelves; without conſidering that they muſt "be *fools*, if they were ſo *." Meaning, for he does not ſtay to explain himſelf, that they muſt be perſons of dull, phlegmatic natures, without paſſions, without ſenſibility, and conſequently incapable of improvement or virtue.

Whenever I have happened to obſerve what are called *the virtues of age* to be innate in youth, I have naturally expected to meet with the vices of it there alſo; and have but rarely found any one of ſuch character uninfected with ſelfiſhneſs or avarice.

When Timon receives a portrait from the painter, he makes a ſatirical reflection upon it, which, though too juſt in itſelf, ſeems to be a good deal out of character in him, at that time; as being previous to the experience which ſoon after might have inſtructed him to have made it.

The painting is almoſt the natural man;
For ſince diſhonour trafficks with man's nature,
He is but outſide; penciled figures are
Even ſuch as they give out.

* The Friends, or Original Letters, Vol. II. Letter LXXIX.

SCENE III.

Apemantus, on ſeeing and hearing much embracing and profeſſing between Timon and Alcibiades, mutters thus to himſelf:

That there ſhould be ſmall love amongſt theſe ſweet knaves, and all this courteſy! The ſtrain of man is bred out into baboon and monkey.

Sterne ſaid of French politeneſs, that *it might be compared to a ſmooth coin; it had loſt all mark of character.* To which I think we may add, that courteſy, like counters, by having attained a currency in the world, have come at length to bear an equal rate, we might ſay, a ſuperior one, with pieces of intrinſic value; ſo that one who ſhould make a difference between them in the *modern* traffic of life, would be looked upon as a mere *virtuoſo*, who preferred an *Otho* to a *Georgius*.

We muſt take up with the world, at preſent, as we do with the ſtage, to which it has ſo often been compared. There is *a fable* in both; and if the actors but perform their *perſonated characters* well, we are not to quarrel with them for not exhibiting their *natural ones*.

SCENE V.

The noble Timon, being rendered uneaſy at the too ſervile deferences paid him by his clients, juſtly ſays,

Nay, ceremony was but deviſed, at firſt,
To ſet a gloſs on faint deeds, hollow welcomes;
Recanting goodneſs, ſorry ere 'tis ſhewn;
But where there is true friendſhip, there needs none.

There is a parallel thought in the Merchant of Venice, taken notice of before, in my laſt remarks on that Play.

Furthe

Further on in this Scene, there occurs a paſſage which well deſerves to be quoted, but needs no note.

Timon, Lucius, *and others.*

Lucius. Might we but have the happineſs, my lord, that you would once uſe our hearts, whereby we might expreſs ſome part of our zeals, we ſhould think ourſelves for ever perfect *.

Timon. O, no doubt, my good friends, but the gods themſelves have provided that I ſhould have much help from you; how had you been my friends elſe? Why have you that charitable title from thouſands, did I not chiefly belong to your hearts †? I have told more of you to myſelf, than you can with modeſty ſpeak in your own behalf. And thus far I confirm you. Oh, ye gods, think I, what need we have any friends, if we ſhould never have need of them? They would moſt reſemble ſweet inſtruments hung up in caſes, that keep their ſounds to themſelves. Why, I have oft wiſhed myſelf poorer, that I might come nearer to you. We are born to do benefits. And what better or properer can we call our own, than the riches of our friends? O, what a precious comfort 'tis to have ſo many, like brothers, commanding one another's fortunes! O joy, e'en made away ere 't can be born. Mine eyes cannot hold water.

SCENE VII.

Apemantus. Oh, that men's ears ſhould be
To counſel deaf, but not to flattery!

It is, indeed, an unhappy reflection, to think how few examples there are in life, to controvert this maxim. If the firſt were not the caſe, there would be no ſuch thing as the latter; for men would then *deſerve the praiſe* they get.

* That is, arrived at the perfection of happineſs.

† The ſenſe of this paſſage, in the original text, is made clearer by an alteration of Doctor Johnſon's.

ACT II. SCENE I.

The following ſpeech may ſerve to hint a common truth, that all gifts or preſents from inferiors, my be conſidered but as petitions to their ſuperiors.

Senator. If I want gold, ſteal but a beggar's dog,
And give it Timon; why, the dog coins gold.
If I would ſell my horſe, and buy ten more
Better than he, why, give my horſe to Timon;
Aſk nothing, give it him, it foals me ſtraight
Ten able horſe.

SCENE IV.

The honeſt and anxious ſteward of Timon makes a reflection here, which the experience of all times hath too fully vouched.

Flav. Heavens! have I ſaid, the bounty of this lord!
How many prodigal bits have ſlaves and peaſants
This night englutted! Who, now, is not Timon's?
What heart, head, ſword, force, means, but is lord Timon's?
Great Timon's, noble, worthy, royal Timon's?
Ah! when the means are gone that buy this praiſe,
The breath is gone whereof this praiſe is made;
Feaſt-won, feaſt-loſt; one cloud of winter ſhowers,
Theſe flies are couched *.

SCENE V.

When the reduced and unhappy Timon finds himſelf involved in poverty and diſtreſs, he directs his ſteward to call upon the Body of the Senators, who had ſhared his bounties, for its aſſiſtance in this exigence; in anſwer to which the ſteward acquaints him, that he had taken the liberty to do this, already, upon his own prior knowledge in the ſituation of his affairs. The account he then proceeds

* *Couched*, ſmothered.

to

to give of the reception his application had met with amongst these *shadows* of friendship, is such, I am sorry to say, as those who have ever been under a necessity of making the same experiment, will readily acknowledge to be genuine. Faint expressions of good will, with a strong reproof for extravagances, which they themselves had both encouraged and partaken of, and finally closed with an absolute denial of relief.

Flav. They answer in a joint and corporate voice,
That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot
Do what they would; are sorry—You are honourable—
But yet they could have wished—They know not—
Something hath been amiss—A noble nature
May catch a wrench—Would all were well—'Tis pity—
And so intending * other serious matters,
After distasteful looks, and these hard fractions †,
With certain half-caps, and cold-moving nods,
They froze me into silence.

To which Timon replies, with a competent knowledge of human nature; for he seems to be inspired here, as before ‡:

These old fellows
Have their ingratitude in them hereditary §;
Their blood is caked, is cold, it seldom flows;
'Tis lack of friendly warmth they are not kind;
And nature, as it grows again tow'rd earth,
Is fashioned for the journey, dull and heavy.

After having thrown out this stricture against Age and Avarice, he desires his steward to apply to Ventidius, a young man lately come into the pos-

* *Intending* for *attending to.*

† *Fractions of speech*, as *you are honourable—they could have wished—'tis pity*, &c.

‡ See the last passage of Scene II. of the former Act, with the remark upon it.

§ By *hereditary* he means naturally, or connate with old age.

ſeſſion of a large fortune, whom he had juſt redeemed from the miſeries of a gaol, and reſtrains him only to borrow from him the exact ſum he had before paid for his releaſe, ſaying,

Ne'er ſpeak or think,
That Timon's fortunes 'mong his friends can ſink.

To which the more experienced ſteward replies to himſelf,

Would I could not! That thought is bounty's foe;
Being free itſelf, it thinks all others ſo.

The ſame ſentiment is well expreſſed by Zanga, in the deſcription he gives of his conqueror:

" Is not Alonzo rather brave than cautious,
" Honeſt than ſubtle; *above fraud himſelf,*
" *Slow, therefore, to ſuſpect it in another?*"

The REVENGE.

ACT III. SCENE I.

When Ventidius has declined to lend his aſſiſtance, (though this circumſtance is only hinted at, but not produced upon the ſcene) Timon diſpatches the ſteward * to Lucullus, another young man of promiſing hopes; who anſwers in the ſame ſtrain with the evaſive and ſarcaſtical reply given before by the Senators, as related in the Fifth Scene of the preceding act; pleading incapacity, and reprehending the too profuſe liberality of Timon. After which he forces ſome pieces into Flavius's hand, by way of bribing him to pretend to his maſter, that he had not met with him; and then goes off. Upon which the honeſt and indignant ſteward, flinging away the money, cries out,

* In the text, this perſon's name is *Flaminius*, but I have here diſtinguiſhed him from *Flavius*, to avoid a confuſion of perſons under the ſame character of ſteward.

May

May these add to the number which may scald thee!
Let molten coin be thy damnation,
Thou disease of a friend, and not himself!
Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,
It turns * in less than two nights? O, ye gods!
I feel my master's passion. This slave
Unto this hour has my lord's meat in him:
Why should it thrive, and turn to nutriment,
When he is turned himself to poison?
O! may diseases only work upon it,
And when he's sick to death, let not that part
Of nurture my lord paid for, be of power
To expel sickness, but prolong his hour!

The generous and feeling mind must naturally sympathize with the warmth of resentment, here expressed, though its moral and charity may refrain it from concurring in the anathemas of it.

I cannot quit this scene, till I have remarked upon the character of Ventidius, as represented by two seeming contradictory circumstances, in the first and second Acts.

In the former he shews his honesty and gratitude to his benefactor, by offering to repay the money which had been given to redeem his liberty †; and here he betrays the very reverse of these principles. Is Shakespear inconsistent? No. 'Tis nature still. Ventidius had just then succeeded to an ample patrimony. A sudden afflux of fortune, especially to a person newly emerging from distress, is apt to swell and enlarge the heart at first; but then in mean minds it is as apt to shrink and contract it as suddenly again.

* *Turns*—alluding to milk's growing sour.

† Scene V. of the Play; but only hinted at here, in one of the excursions from Scene II. by way of introducing Timon's fine reply to the offer.

SCENE II.

Enter Lucius, *and three Strangers.*

That disingenuous nature in mankind, which prompts to censure those vices in others, which themselves are capable of, is well exposed here.

When the first stranger has mentioned the forlorn state of Timon's fortunes, and related the story of Lucullus's unkindness towards him, Lucius exclaims with surprize,

What a strange case was that! Now, before the gods, I am ashamed on't. Denied that honourable man! There was very little honour shewn in that. For my own part, I must needs confess I have received some small kindnesses from him, as money, plate, jewels, and such like trifles, nothing comparing to his; yet had he not mistook him, and sent to me †, I should ne'er have denied his occasions so many talents.

But immediately after, in the same scene, upon application made to himself by Servilius, to the same purpose, he thus defends his purse:

What a wicked ‡ beast was I, *(speaking to the messenger)* to disfurnish myself against so good a time, when I might have shewn myself honourable? How unluckily it happened, that I should purchase the day before for a little dirt §, and undo a great deal of honour! Servilius, now, before the gods, I am not able to do——The more beast I say——I was sending to use lord Timon myself, these gentlemen can witness; but I would not, for the wealth of Athens, I had done it now. Commend me bountifully to his good lordship, and I hope his honour will conceive the fairest of me, because I have no power to be kind. And tell him this from me, I count it one of my greatest afflictions, that I cannot pleasure such an honourable gentleman. Good Servilius,

† The sense is corrected here by Doctor Johnson's alteration of the text in a note.

‡ *Wicked* for *unlucky*.

§ *Dirt*, instead of *part*. Theobald.

will

will you befriend me ſo far as to uſe my own words to him?

Then turning to the firſt ſtranger, he ſays, what is too generally experienced through life,

True, as you ſaid, Timon is ſhrunk, indeed;
And he that's once denied will hardly ſpeed.

Upon Lucius and Servilius's going out, the following dialogue is held between the remaining perſons; in which ſome *ſcandalum magnatums* are thrown out againſt the dignity of human nature.

Firſt Stranger. Do you obſerve this, Hoſtilius?
Second Stranger. Ay, too well.
Firſt Stranger. Why this is the world's ſoul;
And juſt of the ſame piece is ev'ry flatterer's ſpirit,
Who can call him his friend,
That dips in the ſame diſh? for, in my knowing,
Timon has been this lord's father,
And kept his credit with his purſe,
Supported his eſtate; nay, Timon's money
Has paid his men their wages. He ne'er drinks
But Timon's ſilver treads upon his lip—
And yet, oh, ſee the monſtrouſneſs of man,
When he looks out in an ungrateful ſhape!
He does deny him in reſpect of his *,
What charitable men afford to beggars.
Third Stranger. Religion groans at it.
Firſt Stranger. For mine own part,
I never taſted Timon in my life,
Nor any of his bounties came o'er me,
To mark me for his friend; yet, I proteſt,
For his right noble mind, illuſtrious virtue,
And honourable carriage,
Had his neceſſity made uſe of me,
I would have put my wealth into partition †,
And the beſt half ſhould have attorned ‡ to him,

* *In reſpect of his*, of Lucius's fortune.
† *Partition*, ſubſtituted for *donation*. Hanmer.
‡ *Attorned*, inſtead of *returned*. Warburton.

So

So much I love his heart—But I perceive
Men now must learn with pity to dispense,
For policy* sits above conscience.

This latter speech savours too much of the former one of Lucius; and, as the Queen says in Hamlet, *the gentleman doth profess too much*; but we shall charitably accept it as sincere, since the speaker's virtue has not been put to the proof.

SCENE III.

Sempronius, another of Timon's *friends*, is here assailed, who evades the request by pleading surprize that he should be the first person applied to on such an exigence, before Lucius, Lucullus, and Ventidius, who had each of them so much higher obligations to his services than himself. But being beaten out of that argument, by being informed of their all having been before *touched, and found base metal*, as the messenger tells him, he then makes use of a device not uncommon in such cases, to pretend a quarrel, or affect a jealousy with a person, in order to have one's resentment pass as an excuse for refusing the favour required.

Sempronius. How! denied him?
Ventidius, Lucullus, Lucius, all denied him?
And does he send to me? Three! Hum—
It shews but little love or judgment in him.
Must I be his last refuge? His friends, like physicians,
Thrice† give him over—Must I take th' cure upon me?
H' has much disgraced me in't—I'm angry at him—
He might have known my place. I see no sense for't,
But his occasions might have wooed me first;
For, in my conscience, I was the first man
That e'er received gift from him;
And does he think so backwardly of me,
That I'll requite it last? No—

* *Policy*, for *selfishness*.
† *Thrice*, instead of *thrive*. Johnson.

So

So it may prove an argument of laughter
To th' rest, and I 'mongst lords be thought a fool.
I'd rather than the worth of thrice the sum
He had sent to me first, but for my mind's sake;
I'd such a courage ‖ then to do him good—
But now, return—
And with their faint reply this answer join;
Who 'bates mine honour, shall not know my coin.

When Sempronius retires, the servant who had brought the message to him makes some reflections, which, with many other instances of the same kind, in these writings, shew that Shakespeare was as prodigal of his wit and sentiment, as Timon was of his favour and fortune, for he often squanders them both upon clowns and lacqueys.

Servant. Excellent! your lordship's a goodly villain. The Devil knew what he did when he made man politic* He crossed † himself by't; and I cannot think but that, in the end, the villanies of man will set him clear ‡. How fairly this lord strives to appear foul! takes virtuous copies to be wicked §. Like those that, under hot ardent zeal, would set whole realms on fire ¶.
Of such a nature is his politic ** love—
This was my lord's best hope; now all are fled,
Save the gods only ‖‖.

SCENE IV.

Another *sentimental footman* sent by one of Timon's creditors to press him for his debt, speaks

‖ *Courage*, for *heart*, or *good will*.
* *Politic*, again for *selfish*. See note last but two.
† *Crossed*, for *blessed* himself, in the Romish sense of the word.
‡ *Set him clear*—Leave him no longer chargeable with the crime of tempting them.
§ By pretending a pique of honour, and a generous resentment, at not having been first applied to.
¶ Alluding to religious wars.
** *Politic*, encore in the same sense.
‖‖ I have transposed these words for the sake of the measure. In the text they stand thus, *Save only the gods.*

the

the following couplet, the last line of which deserves to be made an adage of:

I know my lord hath spent of Timon's wealth,
And now ingratitude makes it worse than stealth.

SCENE VI.

Alcibiades, pleading before the Senate, for the life of a friend who had killed his antagonist in a fair rencounter, thus addresses himself to the court:

Health, honour, and *compassion* to the Senate!
I am an humble suitor to your virtues;
For pity is the virtue of the law;
And none but tyrants use it cruelly,

Our author is always most remarkably strong in his expression, and rich in his argument, upon the subject of this divine attribute of Mercy. Witness Portia's speech in the Merchant of Venice, Isabella's in Measure for Measure, and several other passages of the same kind throughout his writings. To make *pity the virtue of the law*, is a fine idea, and a beautiful expression.

The argument for and against the practice of Duelling, is here very philosophically urged on one side, and as artfully evaded on the other.

Senator. You undergo * too strict a paradox,
Striving to make an ugly deed look fair;
Your words have took such pains, as if they laboured
To bring man-slaughter into form, and set quarrelling
Upon the head of valour, which, indeed,
Is valour misbegot; and came into the world
When sects and factions were but newly born.
He's truly valiant, that can wisely suffer
The worst that man can breathe, and make his wrongs
His outsides; wear them, like his raiment, carelessly;
And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,
To bring it into danger.

* *Undergo*, for *undertake*.

If

If wrongs be evils, and inforce us kill,
What folly 'tis to hazard life for ill?

Alcib. My lord ——

Senator. You cannot make groſs ſins look clear;
It is not valour to revenge, but bear.

Alcib. My lords, then, under favour, pardon me,
If I ſpeak like a captain.
Why do fond men expoſe themſelves to battle,
And not endure all threatenings, ſleep upon't,
And let the foes quietly cut their throats,
Without repugnancy? But if there be
Such valour in the bearing, what make we
Abroad? Why then, ſure, women are more valiant,
That ſtay at home;
If bearing carry it, then is the aſs
More captain than the lion; and the felon,
Loaded with irons, wiſer than the judge,
If wiſdom be in ſuffering *.

I ſhall ſubmit this difficult punctilio of honour † to the deciſion of my male Readers; for, as a woman, I cannot be ſuppoſed to be a competent judge of it. However, I ſhall venture to proceed ſo far as to obſerve, that as this piece of ancient chivalry is ſaid to have been originally inſtituted for our defence, I muſt confeſs, I think it ſhould have reſted there.

Alcibiades then concludes the above ſpeech, by petitioning again for mercy:

Oh, my lords,
As you are great, be pitifully good;
Who cannot condemn raſhneſs, in cold blood?
To kill, I grant, is ſin's extremeſt guſt,
But, in defence, by mercy 'tis moſt juſt.
To be in anger is impiety;
But who is man that is not angry?
Weigh but the crime with this.

* The text has been much improved in this latter part, by Doctor Johnſon.

† Duelling.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

When Timon meets his late delinquent friends at the mock banquet he had prepared and pressed them to, he makes a just sarcasm, as well as a justly provoked one, upon the insincerity of their professions.

Senator. The swallow follows not summer more willingly than we your lordship.

Timon, aside. Nor more willingly leaves winter—Such summer-birds are men.

He again carries on the same strain, in the first part of the grace he pronounces before the covers are taken off.

Timon. The gods require our thanks—

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness. For your own gifts make yourselves praised; but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another; for were your godheads to borrow of men, men would forsake the gods.

When the dishes are exposed, filled only with warm water, he thus expresses his resentment, in just description and apt epithets, for such guests.

May you a better feast never behold,
You knot of mouth friends; smoke, and luke-warm water
Is your perfection *. This is Timon's last;
Who stuck and spangled you with flatteries †,
Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces
Your reeking villainy. Live loathed, and long,
Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time-flies ‡,
Cap and knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks §.

* That is, your perfect resemblance.
† *Flatteries*, for *bounties*, or *favours*.
‡ Summer insects.
§ Machines of motion, which require frequent winding up; or a phrase framed for time-servers.

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE II.

In this Scene, another of Timon's ſervants, or rather *one of Shakeſpeare's* *, delivers himſelf moſt affectionately and affectingly, upon the unhappy condition of his maſter.

As we do turn our backs
From our companion, thrown into his grave,
So his familiars from his buried fortunes
Slink all away; leave their falſe vows with him,
Like empty purſes pick'd; and his poor ſelf,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his diſeaſe of all-ſhunned poverty,
Walks, like contempt, alone.

SCENE III.

There are ſo many unfavourable pictures of the world already given by Shakeſpeare, that though each of them may be very proper, in its reſpective place, to adorn the fable, and maintain the characters in the ſeveral Dramas; yet ſome of them, it may be thought, might be ſpared in a work of this general kind, which requires not ſuch minute attentions: but as my ſcope here is not only to inſtruct the ignorant, to warn the unwary, and inculcate the moral of our author, both from his precepts and examples, but to do him honour alſo as a writer, I think it would be a ſort of injuſtice in me to ſuffer any paſſage in him to remain unnoted, which, beſides conducing to ſuch great ends, may ſerve to ſhew the fecundity of his powers and genius, which has enabled him to treat the ſame ſubject in ſo many different ways, with ſtill new thoughts, and varied expreſſion.

The following ſpeech is a beautiful inſtance of this obſervation.

* See my note following Sempronius's ſpeech, in Scene III. of the foregoing Act.

Timon. Twinned brothers of one womb,
Whose procreation, residence, and birth
Scarce is dividant, touch with several fortunes,
The greater scorns the lesser. Not even nature,
To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune,
But by contempt of nature *.
Raise me this beggar, and denude † that lord,
The senator shall bear contempt hereditary ‡,
The beggar native § honour.
It is the pasture lards the wether's sides,
The want that makes him lean ‖. Who dares, who dare
In purity of manhood stand upright,
And say, This man's a flatterer? If one be,
So are they all; for every greeze ¶ of fortune
Is smoothed by that below. The learned pate
Ducks to the golden fool. All is oblique;
There's nothing level in our cursed natures,
But direct villainy.

In the Sixth Scene following, he exclaims against the world again:

But myself,
Who had the world as my confectionary,
The mouths, the tongues, the eyes, the hearts of men
At duty, more than I could frame employments;
That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves
Do on the oak; have, with one winter's brush,
Fallen from their boughs, and left me open, bare,
For every storm that blows.

* This sentence is obscure. It means, that men, tho' conscious of the imperfection of human nature, when puffed up by fortune will despise others for their common imperfections, as if they were themselves exempt from them.

† *Denude*, strip, or deprive him of his possessions.

‡ He uses the word *hereditary* here, with the same latitude he has done before. See note 4th on Scene V. of Second Act. In this place it means, that contempt is the usual portion or patrimony of poverty.

§ *Native*, is used in the same sense with *hereditary*, as above explained.

‖ The text has been cleared of its difficulty, and much improved in its sense, in this passage, by Doctor Warburton.

¶ *Greeze*, step, or degree.

But

But to return. At the end of the former ſpeech, upon finding gold while he was digging for roots, he ſays,

Thus much
Of this will make black, white; fair, foul; wrong, right;
Baſe, noble; old, young; coward, valiant.
You gods! why, this—this, you gods! why this
Will lug your prieſts and votaries from your ſides;
Pluck ſtout men's pillows from beneath their heads*.
This yellow ſlave
Will knit and break religions; bleſs th' accurſed;
Make the hoar leproſy adorned; place thieves,
And give them title, knee, and approbation,
With ſenators on the bench; this is it
That makes the mourning † widow wed again.
Come, damned earth,
Thou common whore of mankind, that putt'ſt odds
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee
Do thy right nature ‡. [*Burying it.*

And again, in the Sixth Scene of this Act, looking on the gold, he renews the ſame reflections.

O thou ſweet king-killer, and dear divorce
'Twixt natural ſon § and ſire! thou bright defiler
Of Hymen's pureſt bed! thou valiant Mars!
Thou ever young, freſh, loved, and delicate wooer,
Whoſe bluſh doth thaw the conſecrated ſnow,
That lies on Dian's lap ‖! thou viſible god,
That ſoldereſt cloſe impoſſibilities,
And make'ſt them kiſs! that ſpeak'ſt with ev'ry tongue,
To ev'ry purpoſe! O thou touch of hearts!
Think thy ſlave man rebels; and by thy virtue

* Kill them before their time, for the ſake of their wealth.

† The word in the text is *wappened*, but the Commentators not agreeing about the ſenſe of the expreſſion, I have ventured to ſubſtitute one that needs no explanation.

‡ Lie hid in the bowels of the earth, where kind Providence meant to conceal thee.

§ This adjective is meant in the liberal ſenſe of the word, not the legal one.

‖ What a beautiful and poetical paſſage is here, both in the imagery and the expreſſion!

Set

Set them into confounding odds, that beasts
May have the world in empire.

I have suffered these last lines to pass, as they seem as well to continue the enumeration of the fatal effects of avarice, as to denounce a curse against it.

SCENE IV.

When Alcibiades meets with Timon wild in the woods, he asks with concern and surprize,

How came the noble Timon to this change?

To which he severely replies, but in Shakespeare's usual sport of fancy, even on the most serious subjects,

As the moon does, by wanting light to give;
But then renew I could not, like the moon;
There were no suns to borrow of.

Alcibiades. I've heard in some sort of thy miseries.
Timon. Thou saw'st them when I had prosperity.

And in the next Scene, in an invocation to the earth, he says,

Dry up thy marrows, vines, and plough-torn leas,
Whereof ingrateful man, with lickerish draughts,
And morsels unctuous, greases his pure mind,
That from it all consideration slips.

SCENE VI.

Here also are some more strictures thrown out *contra mundum*, with which I shall conclude this Act.

Timon *and* Apemantus.

Apemantus. What man didst thou ever know unthrift, that was beloved after his means?

Timon. Who, without those means thou talk'st of, didst thou ever know beloved?

ACT V. SCENE I.

Flavius the good steward, upon seeing his master sitting before the mouth of his cave, makes the following

lowing fond and pathetic exclamation, ſucceeded by reflections, in the ſame ſtile with thoſe which moſtly fill this play:

Oh, ye gods!
Is yon deſpiſed and ruinous man my lord?
Full of decay and failing?
Oh, monument and wonder of good deeds,
Evilly beſtowed!
What change of honour deſperate want has made!
What viler thing upon the earth than friends,
Who can bring nobleſt minds to baſeſt ends;
How rarely * does it meet with this time's guiſe,
When man was wiſhed to love his enemies.
Grant I may ever love, and rather woo
Thoſe that *would* miſchief me, than thoſe that *do*! †

SCENE II.

Here alſo in the ſame ſtrain our Author proceeds. When two of Timon's former ſycophants, upon hearing that their patron is ſuddenly become rich again, are going together to cajole him, as before, they hold the following dialogue with each other.

Poet *and* Painter.

Poet. What have you now to preſent unto him?

Painter. Nothing, at this time, but my viſitation; only I will promiſe him an excellent piece.

Poet. I muſt ſerve him ſo too; tell him of an intent that's coming toward him.

Painter. Good as the beſt. Promiſing is the very air of the time; it opens the eyes of expectation. Performance is ever the duller for his act; and, but in the plainer and ſimpler kind of people, the deed is quite out

* *Rarely*, for *ſitly*.

† This paſſage is difficult. Doctor Warburton has altered the text, to accommodate it to his explanation; and Doctor Johnſon has reſtored it. The meaning of it, as it here ſtands, is, that *open enemies* are leſs dangerous, than *falſe friends*. We can ſhield ourſelves from the one, but are priſoners at diſcretion, with the other. Dr. Johnſon quotes a Spaniſh proverb to the ſame effect: "Defend "me from my friends, and from my enemies I will defend myſelf."

of

of use. To promise, is most courtly and fashionable; performance is a kind of will or testament, which argues a great sickness in his judgment that makes it.

Poet. I am thinking what I shall say I have provided for him. It must be a personating * of himself; a satire against the softness of prosperity, with a discovery of the infinite flatteries that follow youth and opulency. . . . Nay, let's seek him.

Then do we sin against our own estate,
When we may profit meet and come too late.

Painter. True.

While the day serves, before black-cornered night,
Find what thou want'st by free and offered light.

Timon over-hearing their conversation from behind his cave, casts out another invective against gold, and concludes his speech with an expression, which I have also let pass for the reason before-mentioned, in the last note on Scene III. of the former Act. For though used in the form of a curse, it may, however, be hardly considered in that light, as 'tis but the natural consequence of the vice, and is no more than to say, *May the man who swallows poison die*, which he certainly will do.

Timon. What a god's gold, that he is worshipped
In baser temples than where swine do feed!
'Tis thou that rigg'st the bark, and plough'st the foam,
Settlest admired reverence in a slave.
To thee be worship, and thy saints, for aye,
Be crown'd with plagues that thee alone obey.

I shall here conclude my remarks upon this Play, with Dr. Johnson's character of it, as far as the fable has any relation to moral.

"The catastrophe (says he) affords a very powerful warning against that ostentatious liberality "which scatters bounty, but confers no benefit; "and buys flattery, but not friendship."

* *Personating*, a *representation* of his own situation and circumstances.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

TITUS ANDRONICUS, a noble Roman General against the Goths.

MARCUS ANDRONICUS, his brother, and a Tribune of the People.

BASSIANUS, ſecond Son of the late Emperor.

W O M E N.

TAMORA, Queen of the Goths, a Captive.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

IT has been much disputed among the Commentators, whether this Play be originally Shakespeare's, or only the work of some elder Author, revised and improved for representation by him: though, if I might be allowed to venture a criticism upon this subject, I should suppose the intire Piece to be his, and for a very singular reason; Because the whole of the fable, as well as the conduct of it, is so very *barbarous*, in every sense of the word, that I think, however he might have been tempted to make use of the legend, in some hurry or other, for his own purpose, he could hardly have adopted it from any other person's composition. We are quick-sighted to the faults of others, though purblind to our own. Besides, he would never have strewed such sweet flowers upon a *caput mortuum*, if some child of his had not lain entombed underneath. Many of the beauties I hint at, being merely poetical imagery, without any mixture of moral in them, are therefore not inserted among the following notes, as not being the proper object of my remarks, which must, in consequence, appear to fall short of the above compliment.

The arguments, *pro* and *con*, for the authenticity of this Play, are not material to our present purpose; for as we find it among the muster-roll of our Author's forces, it challenges a right to pass in review along with the rest, though there are but very few passages in it to answer the design of this work.

 I should

I ſhould imagine, from the many ſhocking ſpectacles exhibited in this Play, that it could never have been repreſented on any theatre, except the Liſbon ſcaffold, where the duke d'Aveiro, the Marquis of Tavora, *cum ſuis*, were ſo barbarouſly maſſacred, for the ſuppoſed Jeſuits' plot againſt the preſent king of Portugal. And yet Ben Johnſon aſſures us that it was performed, in his time, *with great applauſe*; and we are alſo told that it was revived again, in the reign of Charles the Second, *with the ſame ſucceſs*. The different humours and taſtes of times! It would be not only hiſſed, but driven off the ſtage at preſent.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Tamora, queen of the Goths, and a captive, pleading here to Titus Andronicus for her ſon's life, who was going to be offered up as a victim of war, ſpeaks in Shakeſpeare's uſual ſtile, as remarked before *, on the great article of mercy.

Would'ſt thou draw near the nature of the gods?
Draw near them in being merciful—
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

* * *

There is ſomething ſo ſoothing to the mind, in a deſcription of the ſequeſtered Scene, free from the tumult, the vices, and the violences of the world, that it naturally pleaſes us, even though the grave itſelf be made the ſubject of it.

I affirm that I was ſenſible of ſuch a feeling myſelf, on reading the following paſſage, in this Scene, though without the leaſt manner of diſguſt to life, all the while.

* See Timon, Act III. Scene VI. the firſt remark.

Titus

Titus Andronicus,

On the interment of his sons.

In peace and honour rest you here, my sons;
Rome's readiest champions, repose you here,
Secure from worldly chances and mishaps—
Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells;
Here grow no damned grudges, here no storms,
No noise, but silence and eternal sleep.

SCENE III.

When Bassianus applies to Titus for his interest in support of his election to the Roman empire, he says,

My faction * if thou strengthen with thy friends,
I will most thankful be—And thanks, to men
Of noble minds, is honourable meed.

There is something truly great in the above sentiment, and shews the speaker of it worthy of being an emperor. A grateful heart is all that Heaven itself requires, for its numerous blessings and mercies toward us.

ACT III. SCENE IV.

Marcus Andronicus, endeavouring to repress his brother Titus's excess of grief, who was labouring under the most unheard of cruelties and misery, both in himself and his children, addresses him thus:

Oh! brother, speak with possibilities,
And do not break into these deep extremes.

To which Titus replies:

Is not my sorrow deep, having no bottom?
Then be my passions bottomless with them.

* This innocent word is not to be understood here, in the common acceptation of it. Shakespeare uses it simply to denote any part in a state.

Marcus. But yet let reason govern thy lament.

Titus. If there were reason for these miseries,
Then into limits could I bind my woes.
When Heaven doth weep, doth not the earth o'er-flow?
If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,
Threat'ning the welkin with his big-swoln face?
And wilt thou have a reason for this coil? . . .
Then give me leave, for losers will have leave
To ease their stomachs with their bitter tongues.

Titus, in this speech, says a great deal to excuse the shews and expressions of grief, though in too poetical a stile, rather, for so bad a subject; but I think the first argument of it a very strong one, upon this occasion—

If there were reason for these miseries, &c.

For we certainly suffer those misfortunes, which happen to our lot in the common course of nature, or of justice, with much more resignation of mind, than we can do those which are inflicted on us by the violences of tyranny, cruelty, or malice—Here our detestation and abhorrence of the agent, serve to heighten our resentment of the injury.

In the two last lines above, Shakespeare has given an elevation to the common expression of *losers have leave to speak.* There are instances of the same kind, in our Author, before taken notice of. This is one of his characteristics; and, indeed, I think that his stile and manner are so strongly marked, throughout this Play, (take the above speech, for one instance *) that I own it surprizes me Doctor Johnson should say, "he did not think "Shakespeare's touches discernible in it."

In the same Scene, when some shocking objects of his wretchedness are presented to the view of

* The whole of it, for I have transcribed it short.

Titus,

Titus, he makes a very natural reflection upon them, for a perſon in ſuch unhappy circumſtances.

Ah, that this ſight ſhould make ſo deep a wound,
And yet deteſted life not ſhrink thereat!
That ever death ſhould let life bear his name,
Where life hath no more intereſt than to breathe!

In the extremities of anguiſh, either of mind or body, we are apt to be ſurpriſed at that toughneſs in our frame, which prevents its diſſolution; and are often tempted to wiſh our miſeries might of themſelves have ſufficient force to bring us that relief, which our virtue or religion forbids us to ſupply ourſelves.

MACBETH.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

MACBETH.
DUNCAN.
MACDUFF.
BANQUO.
MALCOLM.
ROSSE.
CATHNESS.
ANGUS.
DOCTOR.
OLD MAN.

WOMEN.

LADY MACBETH.
LADY MACDUFF.

MACBETH.

* * *

ACT I. SCENE V.

Banquo. BUT 'tis ſtrange;
And oftentimes to win us to our harm,
The inſtruments of darkneſs tell us truths,
Win us with honeſt trifles, to betray us
In deepeſt conſequence.

From this ſpeech may be deduced the nature of temptation to evil, which, by ſuggeſting ſome immediate pleaſure or profit, prompts us on to unhappy conſequences.

SCENE VI.

The following deſcription of the death of a brave man, after he has made a peace with his conſcience by contrition, is a fine one.

Malcolm, *ſpeaking to the King of the execution of the Thane of* Cawdor.

Very frankly he confeſſed his treaſons,
Implored your highneſs' pardon, and ſet forth
A deep repentance—Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died
As one that had been ſtudied * in his death,
To throw away the deareſt thing he owed †,
As 'twere a careleſs trifle.

The bravery of ſpirit which ſo many perſons, both antient and modern, have manifeſted, in this

* Who had frequently philoſophiſed upon it.
† *Owed* for *owned*.

great and last article of their lives, seems to argue something more in human nature, *than mere animal existence.*

* * *

The specious appearances of men, by which the ingenuous and unwary are liable to be deceived in their commerce with the world, are marked and lamented by Duncan in this Scene, where, speaking of the above-mentioned rebel, he says,

There is no art
To find the mind's construction * in the face—
He was a gentleman, on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Momus well wished a window in every man's breast. Physiognomists pretend they can take a peep through the features of the face; but this is too abstruse a science to answer the general purposes of life; besides that education may render such knowledge doubtful, as in the case of Socrates. The diseases or unsoundness of the body are generally visible in the countenance and complexion of the invalid; how infinitely more useful would it be, if the vices of the mind were as obvious there! It is not necessary in the first case, because the patient can tell his disorder; but, in the other instance, *the infected person is dumb.*

" O heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest
" Should yet remain, where faith and realty
" Remain not." MILTON.

See the last remark upon Twelfth Night.

* Natural disposition.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

Macbeth, in his meditations on the murder of Duncan, has ſome fine and juſt reflections on the nature of conſcience.

If it were *done* when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly—If th' aſſaſſination
Could trammel up the conſequence, and catch
With its ſucceſs, ſurceaſe *; that but this blow
Might be the be-all, and the end-all—*here*.
But *here*, upon this bank and ſhoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come—But, in theſe caſes,
We ſtill have judgment *here*, that we but teach
Bloody inſtructions; which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor; this even-handed juſtice
Commends † the ingredients of our poiſon'd chalice
To our own lips.

SCENE X.

And in this Scene, when Lady Macbeth upbraids her huſband with cowardice, for not being more determined on the purpoſe of the murder, he makes the following noble reflection:

Prithee, peace—
I dare do all that may become a man—
Who dares do more, is none.

Doctor Johnſon very juſtly ſays, "That theſe "lines ought to beſtow immortality on the Author, "though all his other productions had been loſt."

ACT II. SCENE II.

Again — The horrors of a guilty mind are ſtrongly and finely painted, in the following ſpeech. The images of our crimes not only haunt us in our

* *Succeſs, ſurceaſe.* Theſe two words were reverſed, in the original, but properly tranſpoſed by Theobald.
† *Commends*, for *returns*.

dreams,

dreams, but often become the visions of our waking thoughts. All the bars that Providence could oppose to vice, it has set against it. It could no more, without depriving man of his free-will, and so rendering him equally incapable of merit or blame.

Macbeth, *going to commit the murder.*

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee—
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling, as to sight? Or, art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable,
As that which now I draw—
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
Or else worth all the rest—I see thee, still;
And on the blade o' th' dudgeon gouts * of blood,
Which was not so before—There's no such thing—
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes.

The remainder of this speech is worth quoting, both on account of the fine poetical imagery it contains, and in order to shew the strong terror which guilt had impressed on his mind, by his invoking even inanimate matter not to inform against him.

Now o'er one half the world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep; now Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and withered Murder,
Alarum'd by his centinel, the wolf †,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,

* *Gouts, drops*—from *goute*, French.
† The wolf and all wild beasts go out to prowl at midnight.

Like

Like Tarquin's theft *, gliding tow'rd his design †,
Moves like a ghost—Thou sound and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
And take the present horror from the time ‡,
Which now suits with it.

SCENE III.

Lady Macbeth, speaking here of Duncan's grooms, says,

That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold;
What hath quenched them, hath given me fire.

Our sex is obliged to Shakespeare, for this passage. He seems to think that a woman could not be rendered compleatly wicked, without some degree of intoxication. It required two vices in her; one to intend, and another to perpetrate the crime. He does not give *wine and wassail* § to Macbeth; leaving him in his natural state, to be actuated by the temptation of ambition alone.

* * *

Macbeth, after he had committed the murder, speaking of the Grooms, who lay in the antechamber he had just passed through, says,

* Alluding to a Poem of our Author's, on the story of Tarquin and Lucrece, where he describes his stealing to her chamber in the dead of night.

And in Cymbeline he makes Jachimo say,

" Our Tarquin thus
" Did softly press the rushes, ere he wakened
" The chastity he wounded." [Act II. Scene II.

† The Commentators have disagreed about the original line, in this place. I do not think any of them have sufficiently squared the sense to the expression. The liberty I have ventured to take with it, has at least rendered the passage intelligible.

‡ The *horror* he means, is the *dread silence* that would be interrupted by the exclamation of the stones, which his terror makes him here suppose possible.

§ *Wassail.* An antient beverage of ale, apples, and honey mixed.

On-

One cried, *God bless us!* and *Amen!* the other;
As they had seen me with these hang-man's hands,
List'ning their fear—I could not say *Amen*,
When they did say *God bless us*. . . . . .
But wherefore could I not pronounce *Amen*?
I had most need of blessing, yet *Amen*
Stuck in my throat.

This is natural—One of the most horrid circumstances of guilt, is that total suppression a wicked person is apt to labour under, for a time, of the ability to pray. I should think that, from this very extraordinary circumstance, Divines might deduce a good argument to strengthen the Christian system of theology. If, as the advocates for Natural Religion, say, our vices proceed from the violence of our passions merely, contrition, upon their scheme, might immediately succeed the gratification of our purpose; but, as we are taught that temptation arises from the instigation of an evil spirit, the fiend has still a further interest in the postponing of our repentance. Suicide must certainly be a strong instance of this latter doctrine; as it prompts us, even contrary to the intent of nature, and the general scope, both of our affections, impressions, and feelings, to the destruction of our own existence.

Mach. Methought I heard a voice cry, *sleep no more! Macbeth doth murder sleep*—The innocent sleep—
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve * of care,
The birth † of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast.

In the first part of my remark on the second Scene above, I have observed upon the impressions that a disturbed mind is apt to stamp on our dreams

* A loose skein of silk. Doctor Seward.
† Instead of *death*. Warburton.

and

and ſight. This paſſage adds our ſenſe of hearing, alſo, to the teſtimony of our conſcience.

Toward the latter end of this Scene, there is another hint given to the ſame admonitory purpoſe.

Mach. Whence is that knocking! [*Starting.*
How is't with me, when every noiſe appals me?
What hands are here? Hah! they pluck out mine eyes—

I continued the quotation of the laſt ſpeech above but one, to the end of it, in order to treat my Reader with the beautiful deſcription of ſleep, there given by our Author. And again, at the latter end of the Fifth Scene of the Third Act, Lady Macbeth ſays to her huſband,

You lack *the ſeaſon of all Nature*, ſleep—

The expreſſion here is not only poetical, but philoſophical alſo; for the vegetable world requires ſleep, or reſt, as well as the animal one.

SCENE IV.

Mach. The labour we delight in, phyſicks pain.

This expreſſion is very juſt, in general, but more particularly ſo in the preſent caſe ſuppoſed, reſpecting the offices of friendſhip and good will. How pleaſant, how eaſy is duty, when inſpirited by affection!

* * *

ACT III. SCENE II.

The awe with which a bad man, though ever ſo valiant, is naturally impreſſed by the ſuperiority which virtue gives another brave man, is well depicted here:

Mach. To be thus, is nothing;
But to be ſafely thus—Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature

Reigns

Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares;
And to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear; and, under him,
My genius is rebuked.

The text adds the allusion, here, *as Antony's was by Cæsar*, which Dr. Johnson very judiciously rejects as spurious. I agree with him—I do not think it is in Shakespeare's style—The passage is too warm and immediate, to admit of so cold and remote an image. Besides, this is a soliloquy, and the speaker needed not to have explained his meaning to himself, supposing the expression of *rebuked*, had a reference to that idea.

* * *

The general causes which render men desperate, arising from necessities or vices, are here set forth.

First Murderer. I am one,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed, that I am reckless * what
I do to spite it.
Second Murderer. And I another,
So weary of disastrous tuggs with Fortune †,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it, or be rid on't.

SCENE III.

The wretched condition of a mind not only labouring under the sense of guilt, but dreading the immediate chastisement of it, is more strongly

* Heedless or careless.
† This line is altered for the better, by Warburton.

painted

painted in this Scene, than any where elſe in Shakeſpeare.

Lady Macbeth *ſola.*

Nought's had, all's ſpent,
Where our deſires are got without content.
'Tis ſafer to be that which we deſtroy,
Than by deſtruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter Macbeth.

How now, my lord, why do you keep alone?
Of ſorrieſt fancies your companions making;
Uſing thoſe thoughts, which ſhould, indeed, have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy,
Should be without regard—What's done, is done.

Macb. We have ſcotched * the ſnake, not killed it—
She'll cloſe and be herſelf; whilſt our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let both worlds disjoint, and all things ſuffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and ſleep
In the affliction of theſe terrible dreams,
That ſhake us nightly—Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have ſent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In reſtleſs extaſy †. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he ſleeps well;
Treaſon has done his worſt; nor ſteel, nor poiſon,
Malice domeſtic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further ‡!
O, full of ſcorpions is my mind, dear wife!

SCENE V.

The true ſpirit of hoſpitality is well deſcribed, in the following expoſtulation from Lady Macbeth to her huſband, upon his neglect of the gueſts:

* To *ſcotch*, is to cut acroſs, to ſlaſh or wound.

† *Extaſy.* Any ſtrong perturbation or diſtraction of the mind may be ſo called, though the word is ſeldom uſed by any other writer, but as an expreſſion of pleaſure or joy.

‡ See my ſecond remark on Scene II. Act I. of the former Play.

My

My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer; the feast is sold,
That is not often vouched; while 'tis making
'Tis given with welcome—To feed, were best at home;
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

In the same Scene, Macbeth, speaking in soliloquy, upon the appearance of Banquo's ghost, expresses a common notion, which, however, cannot be too strongly inculcated in the mind of man; as whatever tends to the service of religion or virtue, ceases to be weakness or superstition, though perhaps strict philosophy may not assist to support it.

It will have blood—They say, blood will have blood—
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak *;
Augurs, that understand relations, have
By magpies, and by choughs †, and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.

SCENE VI.

Hecate delivers a truth here, which would better have become a more moral speaker. But Shakespeare can

"Gather honey from the weed,
"And make a moral of the Devil himself." HEN. V.

After having mentioned the magic arts by which she is drawing on Macbeth to his destruction, she adds,

He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear;
And you all know, *security*
Is mortal's chiefest enemy.

* * *

* See last line but two of the last speech in Scene II. of the former Act.

† *Choughs*, sea-gulls.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Macbeth, upon hearing that Macduff had escaped from his design against his life, by flying into England, makes a reflection, which though wickedly applied, in the present case, may, notwithstanding, if it is allowable to extract medicine from poison, *or gather honey from the weed*, be considered as a good general rule of action, in all enterprises of moment.

Time, thou anticipat'st * my dread exploits.
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook,
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment,
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be't thought and done;
The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon *Fife*, give to the edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls,
That trace him in his line—No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do, before this purpose cool.

It was a saying of Charles the Vth, "That we "should deliberate under *Saturn*, but execute under "*Mercury*."

SCENE III.

In the following dialogue the Reader will meet with many just, natural, and prudent reflections, too obvious to need any comment; though, perhaps, those urged by Lady Macduff are carried a little too far, in the present exigence.

Lady Macduff *and* Rosse.

Lady Macduff, *speaking of her husband's flight.*
What had he done, to make him fly the land?
Rosse. You must have patience, madam.

* *Anticipate* for *prevent.*

Lady

Lady *Macduff*. He had none,
His flight was madness; when our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors *.

Rosse. You know not,
Whether it was his wisdom, or his fear.

Lady *Macduff*. Wisdom? To leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion and his titles, in a place
From whence himself does fly?—He loves us not;
He wants the natural touch; for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl †—
All is the fear, and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

Rosse. My dearest cousin,
I pray you school yourself; but for your husband,
He's noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' th' season. I dare not speak much further. . . .
I take my leave of you;
Shall not be long but I'll be here again —
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward,
To what they were before.

But when Lady Macduff is warned herself to fly, she begins, at first, to reason upon the proposition, as she had before done on her husband's flight, by pleading the security of her innocence; but it becoming now *her own case*, she quickly falls into a more prudent and rational manner of argument upon the subject—This is Nature.

Whither ‡ should I fly;
I've done no harm. But I remember now,

* Our laws put the same construction upon it—Flight is taken to imply a tacit confession of guilt; and whenever this is the case it is always made one of the articles of the indictment, that the person charged with a fact, had *fled for the same*.

† See a parallel passage, before quoted in these remarks—
" Unreasonable § creatures feed their young, &c.
Henry VI. Part III. Act II. Scene III.

‡ *Whither* for *wherefore*.

§ *Unreasonable* for *irrational*.

I'm

I'm in this earthly world, where to do harm
Is often laudable; to do good, ſometime
Accounted dangerous folly. Why then, alas!
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To ſay I'd done no harm?

SCENE IV.

The different natures of men, ſhewn in the ſame circumſtances and ſituations, are well diſcriminated here.

Malcolm *and* Macduff.

Malc. Let us ſeek out ſome deſolate ſhade, and there
Weep our ſad boſoms empty.
Macduff. Let us rather
Hold faſt the mortal ſword, and like good men,
Beſtride our down-fall'n birth-dame *. Each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry; new ſorrows
Strike Heaven on the face †, that it reſounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yelled out
Like ſyllables of dolor.

Malcolm betrays the ſame timidity of ſpirit ſtill further, in the continuation of this dialogue, in refuſing to truſt his perſon with Macduff; though he ſupports his apprehenſions, however, upon very reaſonable grounds of diffidence.

What I believe, I'll wail;
What know, believe; and what I can redreſs,
As I ſhall find the time to friend, I will—
What you have ſpoke, it may be ſo, perchance;
This tyrant, whoſe ſole name bliſters our tongues,
Was once thought honeſt: you have loved him well;
He hath not touched you yet. I'm young, but ſomething
You may deſerve of him, through me, and wiſdom ‡

* Stand over and defend our country from its enemies. Doctor Johnſon has ſupplied the hint of *birth-dame*, inſtead of *birth-doom*, which had no meaning.

† Aſſault echo.

‡ *And you might think it wiſdom.* Shakeſpeare often ſets grammar at defiance. His text ſeldom needs improvement, though it ſometimes requires explanation.

To

To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb,
T' appeaſe an angry God.

Macduff. I am not treacherous.

Malcolm. But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may recoil,
In an imperial charge †. I crave your pardon.
That which you are, my thoughts cannot tranſpoſe §;
Angels are bright ſtill, though the brighteſt fell—
Though all things foul ſhould bear the brows of grace,
Yet grace muſt look ſtill ſo ‖.

Macduff. I've loſt my hopes.

Malcolm. Perchance even there, where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawneſs ¶ left you wife and children,
Thoſe precious motives, thoſe ſtrong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealouſies be your diſhonours,
But mine own ſafeties. You may be rightly juſt,
Whatever I ſhall think.

Further on, he makes an admirable enumeration of thoſe qualities which a good prince ought to be principally poſſeſſed of.

Malcolm. The king-becoming graces,
As juſtice, verity, temperance, ſtableneſs,
Bounty, perſev'rance, mercy, lowlineſs,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude.

This, indeed, is to be a king! whoſe firſt ſubjects ſhould be his own appetites and paſſions.

SCENE VI.

Here follows a true, but melancholy deſcription of a people ſuffering under a ſtate of anarchy and

† The influence of kings may be too ſtrong for virtue.

§ *Tranſpoſe*—Alter the nature of.

‖ If you be honeſt, my ſuſpicions touch you not. Appearances may deceive; for virtue can wear no garb but what hypocriſy can aſſume.

¶ *Rawneſs*—Unadviſedly, and unprovidedly.

civil

civil war. The reader has met with many paſſages of the ſame kind, quoted in this work before.

Macduff, Malcolm, *and* Roſſe, *juſt arrived in* England.

Malcolm *to* Roſſe.

Stands Scotland where it did?
Roſſe. Alas, poor country!
Almoſt afraid to know itſelf. It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave, where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once ſeen to ſmile;
Where ſighs, and groans, and ſhrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not mark'd; where violent ſorrow ſeems
A modern extacy *; the dead man's knell
Is there ſcarce aſk'd for whom; and good mens lives
Expire before the flower in their caps,
Dying, or ere they ſicken.
Macduff. Oh, relation
Too nice, and yet too true!
Malcolm. What's the neweſt grief?
Roſſe. That of an hour's age doth hiſs the ſpeaker ‡;
Each minute teems a new one.

In the ſame dialogue, when Roſſe has given Macduff an account of the murder of his wife and children, at which he ſeems to ſtand petrified with ſorrow, Malcolm juſtly warns him of the dangerous conſequences of reſtraining the natural ſhews and expreſſions of grief.

Malolm. Merciful Heaven!
What, Man! Ne'er pull your hat upon your brows—
Give ſorrow words; the grief that does not ſpeak,
Whiſpers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break. . .
Diſpute it like a man.

To which Macduff as juſtly replies, without any diſgrace to philoſophy or religion:

* Alluding to the grimace of the Fanatics. Warburton.
‡ For telling an *old ſtory*.

I ſhall

I ſhall do ſo;
But I muſt feel it as a man.
I cannot but remember ſuch things were,
That were moſt precious to me.

But he then proceeds to a reflection, which, though natural and common for the unhappy to make, in ſuch circumſtances, offends againſt both the principles above-mentioned, philoſophy and religion, as being at once impious and unjuſt:

Did Heaven look on,
And would not take their part?

Lear, on ſeeing Cordelia dead, makes an expoſtulation of the ſame ſort:

" Why ſhould a dog, a horſe, a rat have life,
" And thou no breath at all *?"

But all this ariſes from a too preſumptuous and over-weening notion of our own conſequence in the creation. The pride of man prompts each to conſider himſelf as the principal object of Providence; and we would all of us wreſt the ſtated order of Nature, to ſerve our own purpoſes. But the true philoſophy of the matter is, as Pope very juſtly expreſſes it, in different parts of his Eſſay on Man,

" The Univerſal Cauſe
" Acts not by *partial*, but by *general* laws. . . .
" And ſees with equal eye, as Lord of all,
" An hero periſh, or a ſparrow fall;
" Atoms or ſyſtems into ruin hurl'd,
" And now a bubble burſt, and now a world."

* * *

* In the laſt Scene of the Play.

ACT V. SCENE I.

The effects of a guilty and disturbed mind are extremely well represented here, in the person of Lady Macbeth, by the words and actions with which she betrays her crime, while she is walking in her sleep. "A great perturbation in Nature," as her Doctor says, "to receive at once the benefit "of sleep, and do the effects of watching."

The Doctor, upon discovering the cause of her malady, very justly declares her to be no fit patient for his art, and turns her over, accordingly, to Heaven and her confessors for a cure, saying,

Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles; infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the *Divine* than the *Physician*.
God, God forgive us all.

And again, in the Third Scene, the same subject is continued.

Macbeth. How does your patient, Doctor?
Doctor. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.
Macbeth. Cure her of that—
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the full * bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doctor. Therein the patient
Must minister unto himself.
Macbeth. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.

* The word is *stuff'd*, in the Text, which I have taken the liberty of changing to *full*, to avoid the tautology which occurs at the end of the line.

SCENE II.

The ſituation and deſcription of a wicked uſurper, involved in a domeſtic war to defend himſelf, is finely painted here.

Cathneſs *and* Angus, *ſpeaking of* Macbeth.

Cath. Some ſay he's mad; others, that leſſer hate him,
Do call it valiant fury; but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his diſtempered cauſe
Within the belt of rule.
Angus. Now does he feel
His ſecret murder ſticking on his hands;
Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;
Thoſe he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love; *now does he feel his title*
Hang looſe about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfiſh thief.
*Cath.** Who then ſhall blame
His peſtered ſenſes to recoil and ſtart,
When all that is within him does condemn
Itſelf for being there?

SCENE III.

But in this Scene, the tyrant gives a juſt and ſhocking deſcription of ſuch a character himſelf, ſpeaking in and of his own perſon:

Macbeth. I have lived long enough—My way † of life
Is fall'n into the ſear ‡, the yellow leaf;
And that which ſhould accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I muſt not look to have; but, in their ſtead,

* This ſpeech is ſpoken by Monteth in the original, but I thought it needleſs to encumber the Drama with an additional character, for ſo few lines.

† *Way*, for *ſtage*.

‡ *Sear*, is *dry*: by which he alludes to the autumn of his life, as is plain from the next expreſſion of *the yellow leaf*.

Curſes,

Curſes, not loud, but deep; mouth-homage §, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

SCENE V.

The effect of habitual guilt, in blunting all the fine feelings of the human heart, is well noted here.

Macbeth, *on hearing a cry within.*

I have almoſt forgot the taſte of fears;
The time has been, my ſenſes would have cool'd
To hear a night-ſhriek, and my fell * of hair
Would at a diſmal treatiſe rouſe and ſtir,
As life were in't. I have ſupped full with horrors;
Direneſs, familiar to my ſlaught'rous thoughts,
Cannot once ſtart me.

He then falls into a reflection on the nature of human life, which preſents us with but a melancholy proſpect of our preſent ſtate of exiſtence.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the laſt ſyllable of recorded time;
And all our yeſterdays have lighted fools
The way to duſty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking ſhadow, a poor player,
That ſtruts and frets his hour upon the ſtage,
And then is heard no more! It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of ſound and fury,
Signifying nothing!

* * *

§ I have ſubſtituted *homage* for *honour*, as the latter word is made uſe of juſt before.

* *Fell* is the *ſcalp* or ſkin of the head, through which the hair grows.

POSTSCRIPT.

As I cannot bear the thought of suffering the last gloomy passage cited in the foregoing remarks, to dwell upon my Reader's mind, which, by tempting him to repine at the ways of Providence, might give him cause to lament his having ever been sent into such a *world of woe*, I shall endeavour to argue, as far as I am able, against such representations of life as our Author frequently gives us of our condition in it, and in which he is too generally seconded by many of the more professed writers on Morality.

These philosophers are apt to speak too severely, upon the sum of human life; but only seem to condemn it from distinct parts, and particular instances, which vice, folly, passions, casualty, or intemperance, too often furnish for observation. But I shall here venture to treat this subject more impartially, by considering it upon the whole, and according to the general state or condition in which the great Author of Nature has most benevolently supplied it to us.

We are created with five perfect senses, and the world is stored with variety of objects to afford pleasures to them all; and these we are naturally framed to retain the possession of, even to the full term of life prescribed by the Psalmist, of *threescore years and ten*; till that period of time, when we may ourselves become weary of a longer continuance here, not from the *disgust* of our disappointment, but merely from the *satiety* of our enjoyments. And though our strength may then, or even before, become weakness, it may not, however, be encumbered either with decrepitude or pain: and even to the last we may be still capable of using as much exercise, as age requires;

requires; or if any accidental ail ſhould render more neceſſary, an horſe may reſtore the full benefit, at leaſt, though perhaps not the uſe, of our limbs.

Let us add to theſe, the pleaſures of hope, imagination, reflection, reading, ſcience, converſation, love, friendſhip,

"Relations dear, and all the charities
"Of father, ſon, and brother."

Even our moſt moderate ſatisfactions and enjoyments, though their impreſſions may not be ſo ſenſibly felt, during their continuance, yet if their *moment* be calculated, by multiplying the degree into the duration, we ſhall find the amount to exceed the quantity of more poignant but ſhorter ſenſations.

Let us alſo take into our account the viciſſitude and variety of ſeaſons, with the alteration of day and night;

"Sweet is the breath of morn; her riſing ſweet,
"With charm of earlieſt birds; pleaſant the ſun,
"When firſt on this delightful land he ſpreads
"His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
"Glitt'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
"After ſoft ſhow'rs; and ſweet the coming on
"Of grateful evening mild; then ſilent night
"With this her ſolemn bird, and this fair moon,
"And theſe the gems of Heaven, her ſtarry train."

Thus are deſcribed the delights of Eden, by a Poet ſo enamoured of the beauties of Nature, that he has certainly exerted his utmoſt powers to enhance her charms; and yet even Milton's imagination was not able to tranſcend the reality of thoſe objects and enjoyments, which our common fields and gardens afford us every day.

This is the common life of man; this the condition of the yeoman, the husbandman, the labourer, the artist, the mechanic, the servant—the *many* of mankind. And where sickness, pain, loss of any sense or limb, happens to be the lot of individuals, this is not according to the *course* of Nature, but rather a *violence* against it. And these accidents afflict not the *many*, but the *few*; nor is Providence any more answerable for the *natural*, than for the *moral*, ills of life: one is but incidental to the general constitution and necessity of things, and the other to the appetites and free-will of man.

But sloth, luxury, ambition, vicious passions, envy, hatred, and malice, may render some diseased in body, and others discontented in mind. This is not, however, the *condition* of their nature, but the *corruption* of it; and these are still not the *many*, but the *few*; not the *body* of the people, but the *excrescences* which arise out of it, and must be nourished at its cost — namely, the great, the opulent, and the proud.

——— " The happiness of life
" Depends on our discretion———
" Look into those they call *unfortunate*,
" And closer view'd, you'll find they are *unwise*;
" Some flaw in their own conduct lies beneath;
" And 'tis the trick of fools to save their credit,
" Which brought another language into use."

The REVENGE.

If what I have here said, upon this comparative view of human nature, were not true, Providence must have shewn a manifest partiality to the inferior creation, which is certainly placed in a happier state than man, according to some —to many writers. But Plato speaks upon this subject

ject with a much better philosophy than any of these moral sophisters, when he says, that "God "is good, for he bestows all that is good "upon all creatures, *according to their several* "*capacities*. Each is as happy as it can be; "or, *as its nature permits*; and if any thinks "the several creatures could have been happi-"er, it is, because *he does not understand their* "*natures*."

Who sees not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what he gives, and what denies? POPE.

It may not be improper to quote a passage here, out of a letter from Mr. Pope to Doctor Swift, upon the subject of his *Essay on Man*.

"I am just now (says he) writing, or rather "planning, a book, to bring mankind to look upon "this life with comfort and pleasure, *and put mo-* "*rality in good humour with itself*."

This is the true philosophy of sense and virtue. Gloomy minds are deficient in both.

CORIOLANUS.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS.
COMINIUS.
MENENIUS AGRIPPA.
BRUTUS.
SICINIUS.
SENATORS.
CITIZENS.

WOMEN.

VOLUMNIA.
VIRGILIA.

CORIOLANUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter a Number of mutinous Citizens armed with various Weapons.

1ſt Cit. BEFORE we proceed any further, hear me ſpeak.

All. Speak, ſpeak.

1ſt Cit. You are all reſolved rather to die than to famiſh?

All. Reſolved, reſolved.

1ſt Cit. Firſt, you know Caius Marcius is the chief enemy of the people.

All. We know't, we know't.

1ſt Cit. Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?

All. No more talking on't, let it be done. Away, away.

2d Cit. One word, good citizens.

1ſt Cit. We are accounted poor citizens, the Patricians good. What authority ſurfeits on, would relieve us. If they would yield us but the ſuperfluity, while it were wholeſome, we might gueſs they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear*. The leanneſs that afflicts us, the object of our miſery, is as an inventory to particularize their abundance; our ſufferance is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our *pikes*, ere we become *rakes*†; for the gods know I ſpeak this in hunger for bread, not in thirſt for revenge.

* Not worth the charge of maintaining.

† This miſerable clinch is not worth the trouble of correcting or explaining.

The

The nature and reaſoning of all mutinous caballers are fully ſhewn in the above ſhort Scene. The common people are apt to impute all national grievances or calamities to the fault of their rulers, tho' ever ſo unavoidable, from the nature of things, failure of ſeaſons, or other incidental misfortunes whatſoever. If freedom of ſpeech and the liberty of the preſs were not reſtrained in Turkey, I make no doubt but a Muſſulman populace would charge the plague to the account of their Sultans or their Viziers.

In the ſame Scene, that abatement of eſteem and praiſe, which is the natural conſequence of perſons appearing to over-rate their own merits, more eſpecially when this is betrayed by ſhewing pride or contempt to others, is very juſtly remarked on.

2d Cit. Would you proceed eſpecially againſt Caius Marcius?

All. Againſt him firſt. He's a very dog to the commonalty.

2d Cit. Conſider you what ſervices he has done for his country?

1ſt Cit. Very well; and could be content to give him good report for't; but that *he pays himſelf with being proud.*

All. Nay, but ſpeak not maliciouſly.

1ſt Cit. I ſay unto you what he hath done famouſly, he did it to that end. Though ſoft-conſcienced men can be content to ſay it was for his country, he did it *to pleaſe his mother*, and to be partly proud; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.

The above expreſſion, of *to pleaſe his mother*, is taken verbatim from Plutarch, who, in the Life of Coriolanus, ſays of him, "The end which "others propoſed in their acts of valour, was glo-"ry; but he purſued glory, *becauſe the acquiſition* "*of it delighted his mother.*"

Though

Though this ſeems to be a childiſh reaſon, yet 'tis very well to be accounted for. His father died when Caius Marcius was but an infant; the care of his education then devolved upon the mother, who gave him his firſt leſſons of bravery and honour, and took pains to inſpire his youth with that martial ſpirit which ſhe thought became a Roman and a Patrician. It was natural, then, that his exploits ſhould ſtill bear a reference to the perſon under whoſe tutelage he had been trained to arms.

SCENE II.

Here Menenius Agrippa expoſtulates with the unruly populace, in a manner conformable to my firſt remark on the preceding Scene.

Menen. Why, maſters, my good friends, mine honeſt neighbours,
Will you undo yourſelves?
Citizen. We cannot, Sir; we are undone already.
Menen. I tell you, friends, moſt charitable care
Have the Patricians of you. For your wants,
Your ſufferings in this dearth, you may as well
Strike at the heavens with your ſtaves, as lift them
Againſt the Roman ſtate; whoſe courſe will on
The way it takes, cracking ten thouſand curbs
Of more ſtrong links aſunder, than can ever
Appear in your impediment. For the dearth,
The gods, not the Patricians, make it; and
Your knees to them, not arms, muſt help. Alack,
You are tranſported by calamity
Thither where more attends you; and you ſlander
The helms o' th' ſtate, who care for you like fathers,
When you curſe them as enemies.

But this argument not quieting the tumult, he proceeds to give them the famous apologue of *The Belly and Members*, borrowed from Æſop; which, though already ſo generally known that it need not be related, yet, as the Reader may chuſe

to

to ſee the ſtory in Shakeſpeare's ſtile and manner of telling it, I ſhall ſupply the Fable here, leaving out the ſeveral breaks and interruptions of the dialogue in which it is recited.

Menen. Either you muſt
Confeſs yourſelves wond'rous malicious,
Or be accuſed of folly. I ſhall tell you
A pretty tale, it may be you have heard it;
But, ſince it ſerves my purpoſe, I will venture
To ſtale't * a little more. . . . . .
There was a time when all the body's members
Rebelled againſt the belly; thus accuſed it—
That only like a gulph it did remain
I' th' midſt o' th' body, idle and unactive,
Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing
Like labour with the reſt; where † the other inſtruments
Did ſee and hear, deviſe, inſtruct, walk, feel,
And mutually participate; did miniſter
Unto the appetite and affection common,
Of the whole body—The belly anſwered,
And tauntingly replied
To th' diſcontented members, th' mutinous parts,
That envied his receipts—Even ſo, moſt fitly ‡,
As you malign our ſenators, for that
They are not ſuch as you—Note me, good friend,
Your moſt grave belly was deliberate;
Not raſh, like his accuſers; and thus anſwered—
True it is, my incorporate § friends, quoth he,
That I receive the general food at firſt,
Which you do live upon; and fit it is,
Becauſe I am the ſtorehouſe, and the ſhop
Of the whole body. But, if you do remember,
I ſend it through the rivers of your blood,

* *Stale it*, is to render it more *ſtale*, by repeating it. Theobald. The word in the text is *ſcale*.

† *Where*, for *whereas*. Johnſon.

‡ *Fitly*, for *exactly*. Warburton.

§ The word *incorporate* has a double propriety in this place, as applying equally to the body natural and the body politic. The Commentators have given notes upon more inſignificant paſſages.

Even

Even to the court, the heart, to th' ſeat o' th' brain;
And through the cranks ‖ and offices of man,
The ſtrongeſt nerves, and ſmall inferior veins,
From me receive that natural competency,
Whereby they live. And though that all at once
You, my good friends, (this ſays the belly) mark me,
Though all at once you cannot
See what I do deliver out to each,
Yet I can make my audit up, that all
From me do back receive the *flour* of all,
And leave me but the *bran*.

He then gives them the expoſition of the allegory, in the following words:

The ſenators of Rome are this good belly,
And you the mutinous members; for examine
Their counſels, and their cares, digeſt things rightly,
Touching the weal o' th' common, you ſhall find
No public benefit which you receive,
But it proceeds or comes from them to you,
And no way from yourſelves.

SCENE III.

Here Coriolanus, in a ſtile of auſterity and haughtineſs, which he preſerves through the whole of his ſpirited, but harſh character, rates the malecontent citizens, in a ſpeech which truly deſcribes the nature of every populace in all free ſtates.

He that will give good words to thee, will flatter
Beneath abhorring. What would ye have, ye curs,
That likes * nor peace, nor war? The one affrights you,
The other makes you proud. He that truſts to you,
Where he ſhould find you lions, finds you hares;
Where foxes, geeſe; you are no ſurer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,

‖ *Cranks*, put here for the circulation of the blood, and other juices of the body. *Crank* ſignifies a winding paſſage.

* *Likes*, inſtead of *like*, *nor peace*, *nor war*. Whoſe diſpoſitions being both cowardly and inſolent, are neither ſuited to a ſtate of peace or war.

Or

Or hailſtone in the ſun. Your virtue † is,
To make him worthy whoſe offence ſubdues him,
And curſe that juſtice did it ‡. Who deſerves greatneſs,
Deſerves your hate; and your affections are
A ſick man's appetite; who deſires moſt that
Which would encreaſe his evil—He that depends
Upon your favours, *ſwims with fins of lead,*
And hews down oaks with ruſhes—Hang ye—Truſt ye?
With every minute you do change a mind,
And call him noble that was now your hate;
Him vile, that was your garland. What's the matter,
That in the ſeveral places of the city
You cry againſt the noble ſenate, who,
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which elſe
Would feed on one another?

And afterwards, ſpeaking of them to Menenius, he adds,

They'll ſit by the fire, and preſume to know
What's done i' th' Capitol; who's like to riſe;
Who thrives, and who declines; ſide factions, and give out
Conjectural marriages §; making parties ſtrong,
And feeble ſuch as ſtand not in their liking,
Below their cobbled ſhoes.

SCENE VI.

This place affords us a deſcription of the characteriſtic *Roman Matron* of thoſe times, ſet in contraſt with the *Woman of Nature.*

Volumnia, *the Mother, and* Virgilia, *the Wife of* Coriolanus, *after he had marched againſt the* Volſcians.

Volumnia. I pray you, daughter, ſing, or expreſs yourſelf in a more comfortable ſort. If my ſon were

† *Virtue*, for *nature*, or *quality*.

‡ This paſſage ſurely needed an explanation to all but the quick conceptions of the Commentators, who have therefore neglected it. The meaning I take to be this: *You would chant out hymns of triumph to the conqueror who ſhould enſlave, while you'd riſe in arms againſt the laws that would reſtrain you.*

§ *Marriages*, for *leagues*, or *alliances*.

my

my husband, I would freelier rejoice in that absence, wherein he won honour, than in the embracements of his bed, where he would shew most love. When yet he was but tender bodied, and only son of my hope; when youth with comelineſs plucked all gaze that way; when, for a day of a king's entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding; I, considering how honour would become such a person, that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir, was pleased to see him seek danger, where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him, from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak*. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man child, than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

Virgilia. But had he died in the business, madam, how then?

Volumnia. Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely. Had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather eleven die nobly for their country, than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

There appears to be a vast difference here, between the sentiments of these two matrons; but this may be well accounted for, from the difference of their situations and circumstances in life. Volumnia, having been left a widow, in the infancy of her son, and taking upon herself the charge of his education, had, it may be supposed, soon silenced the tenderness of a mother in her breast, and assumed the spirit of a father, to fulfil her trust; and by constantly endeavouring to inspire her pupil with the chief virtues of a Roman, magnanimity, and love of his country, she may be said in a manner to have educated herself at the same time to bravery, fortitude, and contempt of death.

* The *civic wreath*, given as a mark of distinction to those who had saved the life of a citizen in battle.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

The true character of a soldier is well described in this Scene. When Coriolanus, in the heat of battle, and covered with blood, demands a fresh supply of troops from Cominius, the General answers,

Take your choice of those
That best can aid your action.
Coriol. Those are they
That are most willing. If any such be here,
As it were sin to doubt, that love this painting,
[*Pointing to his bloody front.*
Wherein you see me smeared; if any fear
Less for his person than an ill report;
If any think brave death outweighs bad life,
And that his country's dearer than himself,
Let him alone, or, many, if so minded,
Wave thus t' express his disposition, [*Waving his hand.*
And follow Marcius.

ACT II. SCENE II.

That warmth of affection with which Menenius greets good news from his friend must charm the sensible Reader. On hearing that Coriolanus had defeated the Volscians, and written a letter to him on that occasion, he cries out in transport,

" Take my cap *, Jupiter, and I thank thee. Hoo! Marcius coming home! I will make my house reel to-night. . . . . A letter for me! It gives me an estate of seven years health; in which time I shall make a lip at the physician †; the most sovereign prescription in Galen is but empiric; and, to this preservative, of no better report ‡ than a horse-drench.

* Meaning, I'll throw up my *cap* to the skies for joy. Doctor Warburton changes the word to *cup*, as designing a *libation* of thanks——I think unnecessarily.

† Scorn the aid of physic.

‡ Of no more value or estimation.

And

And again, in the next Scene, upon meeting him, he expresses the fulness of his heart, which exceeds even to pain, in very strong and apt terms:

A hundred thousand welcomes—*I could weep,*
And I could laugh; I'm light and heavy—Welcome!

These speeches have a double beauty in them, if it is considered by whom they are delivered. It would not have near the effect upon the Reader, if spoken by a more stayed and sober person; for virtues are apt to strike us more forcibly in slight characters, than in solid ones; and Menenius has already given us a description of himself, in the preceding Scene, which sufficiently justifies me in this distinction:

I am known to be a humorous Patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine, without a drop of allaying Tiber in't; said to be something imperfect, in favouring the first complaint ¶; hasty and tinder-like, upon too trivial motion; one that converses more with the buttock of the night, than with the forehead of the morning: What I think, I utter; and spend my malice in my breath.

SCENE III.

As I have quoted several descriptions of character, before, in the course of this work, for the reason already given in its proper place, as being within the prescription of moral; and besides that those were merely imaginary, though truly copied from real life, I think that this one of Coriolanus, being sufficiently vouched from authentic story †, ought, therefore, to be more particularly remarked upon in these notes.

¶ Apt too quickly to follow the suggestions of my appetite.
† Plutarch, Livy, &c.

In

In the first Scene of the former Act, in a passage above quoted, second remark, one of the discontented citizens charges him with paying himself for his services, *with being proud*; and his reproach was just; but yet here he seems to appear in a light the very reverse of such a character; for when the herald, in the voice of Rome, is proclaiming his merits, he stops him short, by crying out,

No more of this; it does offend my heart.
Pray now, no more.

He manifests the same modesty also, in the Sixth Scene following. When he appears to be uneasy in his seat, upon the applause given him for his prowess, one of the senators says to him,

Sit, Coriolanus, never shame to hear
What you have nobly done.

To which he replies,

Your honour's pardon—
I'd rather have my wounds to heal again,
Than hear say how I got them.
Brutus. Sir, I hope,
My words disbenched you not *.
Coriolanus. No, Sir; yet oft,
When blows have made me stay, I fled from words—
You soothe not, therefore hurt not; but your people,
I love them as they weigh.
Menenius. Pray now, sit down.
Coriolanus. I had rather have one scratch o' my head i' th' sun,
When the alarum were struck, than idly sit,
To hear my *nothings* monstered †.
Menenius. You see, [*To the people.*
He had rather venture all his limbs, for honour,
Than one of's ears, to hear it:

* This alludes to a speech of his in this Scene, not quoted here, where he charges Coriolanus with his contempt of the people.
† *Monstered*, so much wondered at.

Afterwards,

Afterwards, Cominius ſpeaking of him, ſays,

Our ſpoils he kicked at,
And looked upon things precious, as they were
The common muck o' th' world; he covets leſs
Than miſery ‡ itſelf would give, rewards
His deeds with doing them, and is content
To ſpend his time, to *ſpend* it ‖.

Again, when he is preſſed to harangue the people, in order to get himſelf elected Conſul, he anſwers in the ſame ſtile and ſpirit of character,

I beſeech you,
Let me o'er-leap that cuſtom; for I cannot
Put on the gown, ſtand naked ¶, and intreat them,
For my wounds' ſake, to give their ſuffrages—
Pleaſe you that I may paſs this doing.
Sicinius. Sir, the people muſt have their voices,
Nor will they bate one jot of ceremony.
Menenius. Put them not to't—Pray, ſit you to the cuſtom,
And take t' ye, as your predeceſſors have,
Your honour with your form.
Coriolanus. It is a part
That I ſhall bluſh in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people. . . . .
To brag unto them, thus I did, and thus—
Shew them th' unaching ſcars, which I would hide,
As if I had received them for the hire
Of their breath only.

But theſe ſeeming contradictions form, in effect, but one character ſtill. The over-valuing his merits, and the under-valuing the applauſe of them, are both equally founded in pride, fierceneſs, and impatience. Plutarch draws a compariſon of Co-

‡ *Miſery*, for *avarice*.
‖ To do great actions for the ſake of doing them. The comment, and the alteration of the text, from *end it* to *ſpend it*, is Doctor Johnſon's.
¶ Expoſing his body to ſhew his wounds.

riolanus

riolanus with Alcibiades; but I think he more resembles Achilles, as described by Horace: "Vigilant, irascible, inflexible, harsh, and above all "laws; acknowledging no rights, but those of "conquest *."

Let us now return to the third Scene, again, from whence the pursuit of our subject had tempted us to wander.

When Coriolanus comes home victorious from the Volscian war, his family and friends gather about him, complimenting and congratulating him on his bravery and success; all but Virgilia, his wife, whose heart being fuller of joy and fondness than them all put together, was therefore rendered incapable of uttering a syllable on that occasion—Upon which he salutes her thus:

My gracious silence, hail!

Doctor Warburton gives the following note upon this passage: "The epithet joined to *silence* shews "it not to proceed from sullenness or reserve, but "to be the effect of a virtuous mind possessing itself in peace. The expression is extremely sublime; and the sense of it conveys the finest praise "that can be given to a woman."

I perfectly agree with the Doctor in his opinion, both of the beauty of the expression, and the merit of the character implied in it. I have taken the liberty of leaving out the adjunct, *good*, joined to the last word, in his note, as being superfluous in that place; for no *bad* one can possibly deserve praise.

SCENE VII.

Coriolanus preserves still the same kind of indomitable sturdiness and severity, in the following

* *Impiger, iraeundus, inexorabilis, acer,*
Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.

speech,

ſpeech, where he alſo takes occaſion, very juſtly, to cenſure the ſuperſtitious reverence the world is too apt to bear towards cuſtoms which are not founded in reaſon.

When he has, with infinite difficulty, been prevailed upon by his friends to ſolicit votes for the Conſulate, and having obtained them, being left alone, he ſpeaks thus to himſelf:

Moſt ſweet voices———
Better it is to die, better to ſtarve,
Than crave the hire, which firſt we do deſerve.
Why in this woolviſh * gown ſhould I ſtand here,
To beg of Hob and Dick that do appear,
Their needleſs voucher? Cuſtom calls me to't—
What cuſtom wills in all things, ſhould we do't,
The duſt on antique time would lie unſwept,
And mountainous error be too highly heapt,
For truth to o'er-peer—Rather than fool it ſo,
Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus.

* * *

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The difference between the philoſophy we preach, and that we practiſe, is properly diſtinguiſhed in this Scene.

When Coriolanus is going into exile, and taking leave of his family and friends, he endeavours to reſtrain the immoderate grief of his mother on that occaſion, by repeating thoſe ſtoical precepts to her, which ſhe had often inculcated to him during the term of his pupilage.

Coriolanus. Come, leave your tears—A brief farewel.
The beaſt
With many heads butts me away—Nay, mother,
Where is your antient courage? You were uſed

* The candidates gown was made of rough undyed wool.

To

To ſay, extremity was the trier of ſpirits;
That common chances common men could bear;
That, when the ſea was calm, all boats alike
Shewed maſter-ſhip in floating. Fortune's blows
When moſt ſtruck home, being gentle, wounded, craves
A noble cunning *. You were uſed to load me
With precepts that would make invincible
The heart that conned them. . . . . .

Volumnia. Now the red peſtilence ſtrike all trades in Rome,
And occupations periſh!

Coriolanus. What! what! what!
I ſhall be loved, when I am lacked—Nay, mother,
Reſume that ſpirit when you were wont to ſay,
If you had been the wife of Hercules,
Six of his labours you'd have done, and ſaved
Your huſband ſo much ſweat. Cominius,
Droop not; adieu—Farewel, my wife! my mother!
I'll do well yet—Thou old and true Menenius,
Thy tears are ſalter than a younger man's,
And venomous to thine eyes. My ſometime general,
I've ſeen thee ſtern, and thou haſt oft beheld
Heart-hard'ning ſpectacles—Tell theſe ſad women,
'Tis fond † to wail inevitable ſtrokes,
As 'tis to laugh at them.

SCENE III.

In the following ſpeech, there is too true a picture given of the inſtability of human friendſhips and connections.

Coriolanus. Oh, world, thy ſlippery turns! friends now faſt ſworn,
Whoſe double boſoms ſeem to wear one heart,
Whoſe hours, whoſe bed, whoſe meal and exerciſe,
Are ſtill together; who twine, as 'twere, in love

* This paſſage is confuſedly expreſſed —— The meaning is, that when fortune has given us ſevere blows, to preſerve a mild or gentle temper under our wounds, requires a well practiſed *philoſophy*; which he calls *cunning*, as being a difficult art or ſcience.

† 'Tis weak, idle, or fooliſh.

Unſeparable;

Unseparable; shall, within this hour
On a dissention of a doit, break out
To bitterest enmity. So fellest foes,
Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep,
To take the one the other, by some chance,
Some trick ‡, not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends,
And inter-join their issues.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Menenius, when he is going to parley with Coriolanus, on the part of Rome, makes a speech which shews a perfect knowledge of human nature; for certainly a proper attention to times, seasons, and circumstances, goes a considerable way towards the success of our requests.

I'll undertake it.
I think he'll hear me—Yet to bite his lip,
And hum at good Cominius, much unhearts me.
He was not taken well, he had not dined—
The veins unfilled, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give, or to forgive; but when we've stuff'd
These pipes, and these conveyances of blood,
With wine and feeding, we have supple souls
Than in our priest-like-fasts. Therefore I'll watch him,
Till he be *dieted* to my request,
And then I'll set upon him.

SCENE III.

Coriolanus, upon seeing his wife, mother, and son, come habited in mourning, to solicit in favour of Rome, says,

My wife comes foremost, then the honoured mould
Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand,
The grand-child to her blood—But, out, Affection!
All bond and privilege of nature break!
Let it be virtuous, to be obstinate. [*Virgilia bends.*
What is that curt'sie worth? Or those dove's eyes,

‡ Some slight occasion, or trivial motive.

Which might make gods forſworn? I melt, and am not
Of ſtronger earth than others. My mother bows,
As if Olympus to a mole-hill ſhould
In ſupplication nod; and my young boy
Hath an aſpect of interceſſion, which
Great Nature cries, *Deny not*—Let the Volſcians
Plough Rome, and harrow Italy; I'll never
Be ſuch a goſling to obey inſtinct; *but ſtand*
As if a man were author of himſelf,
And knew no other kin.

Coriolanus has here carried his ſternneſs, and the ſtrained principles of ſtoical pride, whoſe throne is only *in the mind*, as far as they could go; and now great Nature, whoſe more ſovereign ſeat of empire is *in the heart*, takes her turn to triumph; for, upon the joint prayers, tears, and entreaties of his family, he becomes *a man*, at laſt, crying out—

Not of a woman's tenderneſs to be,
Requires nor child, nor woman's face to ſee—
I've ſat too long. [*Endeavours to go, but is withheld.*

And afterwards, being quite overcome by his affections, he thus exclaims:

O, mother, mother!
[*Holding her hands, and keeping ſilent for ſome time.*
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural ſcene
Do laugh at *. Oh, my mother, mother, oh!
You've won a happy victory to Rome;
But for your ſon—Believe it, oh, believe it—
Moſt dangerouſly you have with him prevailed,
If not moſt mortal to him—Let it come—

The expreſſions in the firſt part of this latter ſpeech, with the prophetical concluſion of it, are taken almoſt literally from Plutarch, in his Life of Coriolanus.

* Look down with contempt on the unequal ſtrife between pride and nature.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

JULIUS CÆSAR.
MARK ANTONY.
BRUTUS.
CASSIUS.
OCTAVIUS.
METELLUS CIMBER.
MESSALA.
LUCILIUS.
ARTEMIDORUS.

WOMEN.

NONE.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

IN this Scene there is a notion delivered, which may be productive of good or bad effects, according to the characters of the persons who embrace it. In rational and virtuous minds, it may inspire an active pursuit of fortune, in whatever profession or scene of life they are engaged in; but in weak or wicked natures, may betray to hazardous schemes, or tempt to vicious courses. The same principle has made generals and admirals of common soldiers and sailors; chancellors and bishops of attorney's clerks and sizers *, on the one part; projectors, conspirators, usurpers, and assassins, on the other.

Cassius. Men at some times are masters of their fates;
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
Brutus and Cæsar? What should be in that Cæsar?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with them,
Brutus will start a spirit, as soon as Cæsar—
Now in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat does this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great?

SCENE IV.

There is a truly philosophic reflection made here, on the several characters of men, taken both from

* *Sizer*, the lowest rank of students in an University.

their persons and manners. This is one of the many instances of our Author's knowledge and observation upon human nature.

Cæsar *and* Antony.

Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights;
Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much—Such men are dangerous.

Antony. Fear him not, Cæsar, he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given.

Cæsar. Would he were fatter—But I fear him not—
Yet if my name * were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid,
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer; and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit,
That could be moved to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whilst they behold a greater than themselves;
And therefore are they very dangerous.

SCENE V.

Brutus *and* Cassius.

Brutus, *speaking of* Casca.

What a blunt fellow is this grown to be!
He was quick mettle, when he went to school.

Cassius. So is he, now, in execution
Of any bold or noble enterprize,
However he puts on this tardy form.
This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,
Which gives men stomach to digest his words
With better appetite.

* I was tempted to change this word to *mind*, as being more intelligible; but I recollected that Shakespeare meant to make Cæsar affect to speak of his *name* as his *person*—He says afterwards, in the same speech, *For always I am Cæsar*; and throughout in the same stile.

The

The above is a ſort of character we often meet with in life, and which has generally the effect here attributed to it.

In the ſame Scene there is a juſt and prudent maxim ſet forth, with regard to the perſons and characters that men ſhould aſſociate themſelves with, who would preſerve either their underſtanding, their honour, or integrity.

Caſſius. Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I ſee,
Thy honourable metal may be wrought
From what it is diſpoſed; therefore, *'tis meet*
That noble minds keep ever with their likes;
For who ſo firm, that cannot be ſeduced?

Some moral writer ſays, "That if men of ſenſe, "taſte, or virtue, have not an opportunity of con- "verſing with their equals, they had much better "live alone." They will certainly be able to preſerve theſe rare qualities much better in ſolitude, than in unequal ſociety—There is a contagion in minds and manners, as well as in bodies, when corrupt.

* * *

ACT II. SCENE I.

Brutus, *ſolus.*

It muſt be by his death; and, for my part,
I have no perſonal cauſe to ſpurn at him:
But for the general—He would be crowned;
How that might change his nature, there's the queſtion.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder,
And that craves wary walking—Crown him—that—
And then I grant we put a ſting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.
Th' abuſe of greatneſs is, when it diſjoins
Remorſe from power; and, to ſpeak truth of Cæſar,
I have not known when his affections ſwayed
More than his reaſon. But 'tis a common proof,
That lowlineſs is young Ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber upwards turns his face;

But when he once attains the utmoſt round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, ſcorning the baſe degrees
By which he did aſcend. So Cæſar may—
Then, leſt he may, prevent—And ſince the quarrel
Will bear no colour, for the thing he is*,
Faſhion it thus; that what he is, augmented,
Would run to theſe and theſe extremities;
And therefore think him like a ſerpent's egg,
Which hatched, would, as his kind, grow miſchievous;
And kill him in the ſhell.

In this ſoliloquy, or ſelf-debate, upon the intended aſſaſſination of Cæſar, the too common frailty of man in the circumſtances of ſucceſsful ambition, is ſtrongly deſcribed, under two very juſt and poetical images; but the inference drawn from it in the concluſion, is certainly carried too far. It might, perhaps, have become an Heathen to prevent an ill, without reſpecting the means; but a Chriſtian, thank God, is forbidden *to do evil, even though good ſhould come of it.*

In the continuance of this ſoliloquy, Brutus gives a ſtrong deſcription of the ſtate of mind which precedes the execution of any great or hazardous purpoſe.

Since Caſſius firſt did whet me againſt Cæſar,
I have not ſlept.
Between the acting of a dreadful thing,
And the firſt motion, all the interim is
Like a phantaſma, or a hideous dream;
The genius and the mortal inſtruments†
Are then in council; and the ſtate of man,
Like to a little kingdom, ſuffers then
The nature of an inſurrection.

* We have no pretence for deſtroying him, from his preſent appearance of character.

† He ſuppoſes a ſtruggle between the good genius and the paſſions.

Mr.

Mr. Addiſon, in his Cato, has a reflection of the ſame kind; but it would be illiberal to quote it here, after the ſtrength of imagery and expreſſion in this of Shakeſpeare's—Beſides, indeed, as Doctor Warburton candidly allows, "There was a great "difference between the two occaſions"—Even as much, we may add, as there is between the two ſpeeches.

SCENE II.

The needleſſneſs of oaths to bind compacts between honeſt men, to which, indeed, might be added the inſufficiency of them to bind knaves, is well urged in this place.

When the cautious Caſſius propoſes to the conſpirators that they ſhall all enter into a ſolemn covenant together, to ſanctify their mutual engagements, the nobler Brutus oppoſes it, in the following words:

No, not an oath. If not the face of men *,
The ſufferance of our ſouls, the times abuſe,
If theſe be motives weak, break off betimes,
And ev'ry man hence to his idle bed;
So let high-ſighted tyranny range on,
'Till each man drop by lottery—But if theſe,
As I am ſure they do, bear fire enough
To kindle cowards, and to ſteel with valour
The melting ſpirits of women; then, countrymen,
What need we any ſpur, but our own cauſe,
To prick us to redreſs? what other bond,
Than ſecret Romans that have ſpoke the word,
And will not palter †? And what other oath,
Than honeſty to honeſty engaged,
That this ſhall be, or we will fall for it?
Swear prieſts, and cowards, and men cautelous,
Old feeble carrions, and ſuch ſuffering ſouls

* *The face of men*, either the dejected looks of the people, or their countenance and approbation of the meaſure.

† To *palter*, to *ſhift*, or *ſhuffle*.

That welcome wrongs. Unto bad causes swear
Such creatures as men doubt; but do not stain
The even virtue of our enterprize,
Nor th' insuppressive mettle of our spirits,
To think that or our cause, or our performance,
Did need an oath; when every drop of blood,
That ev'ry Roman bears, and nobly bears,
Is guilty of a several bastardy,
If he doth break the smallest particle
Of any promise that hath past from him.

Cicero is then proposed to be added to their league, and for the following good and prudent reason:

Metellus Cimber. O let us have him, for his silver hairs
Will purchase us a good opinion,
And buy men's voices to commend our deeds---
It shall be said his judgment ruled our hands;
Our youth and wildness shall no whit appear,
But all be buried in his gravity.

But he is objected to, on account of a sort of character, which is not uncommon in life, and is justly descriptive also of the person to whom it is applied; who, though certainly a very great man, was, notwithstanding, a vain and self-opinionated one likewise.

Brutus. O name him not; let us not break with him*;
For he will never follow any thing
That other men begin.

Afterwards, when Cassius urges the expediency of involving Antony in the same doom with Cæsar, Brutus very nobly refuses to concur, upon the following reasons:

Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
To cut the head off, and then hack the limbs,
Like wrath in death, and envy † afterwards;
For Antony is but a limb of Cæsar,
And in the spirit of man there is no blood.

* *Impart the secret to him.* † *Envy*, for *malice.*

Oh,

Oh, that we then could come by Cæſar's ſpirit,
And not diſmember Cæſar! But, alas!
Cæſar muſt bleed for it---And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
Let's carve him as a diſh fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcaſe fit for hounds;
And let our hearts, as ſubtle maſters do,
Stir up their ſervants to an act of rage,
And after ſeem to chide them *. This ſhall make
Our purpoſe neceſſary, and not envious;
Which ſo appearing to the common eyes,
We ſhall be deemed *purgers*, not *murderers*.

It were much to be wiſhed, for the ſake both of decency and humanity, that ſuch a ſentiment as this, was the ſpirit of laws relative to all capital puniſhments.—Breaking on the wheel, empaling, and other foreign penalties of death, are horrible even to thought; and what muſt they be to the view! Even our own code, though reckoned milder than our neighbours, is hardly leſs barbarous; in the inſtances of quartering, burning, and preſſing to death, if executed according to the full rigour of the ſentence. But the hangman, it ſeems, has more humanity than the legiſlature, as he is ſaid always to render the criminal ſenſeleſs, before he proceeds to the ſeverity of the ſtatute. He firſt kills the *ſpirit*, the *demon* of the law, and then only executes the *dead* letter of it.

There is a ſentiment upon this ſubject, in a late writing, which I think may very properly be quoted here. "I would have all laws mild, but executed "with the utmoſt ſtrictneſs; ſo that juſtice and "humanity may go hand in hand together. I am "not for ſevere executions; for when the penalty

* This paſſage is very obſcure, and the Commentators, according to their uſual ſupineneſs, have left it unnoticed. The meaning may be this—Let us impute the act to our paſſions inſtigated by our fears, and then appear to lament the violence of their proceedings.

"exceeds

" exceeds the offence, it is not *the criminal*, but " *human nature* that suffers. Death alone is suffi- " cient to remove the offender *."

But methinks this argument might be urged still further in favour of clemency—Suppose we should reason thus: " All laws are a mutual com- " pact of society entered into with itself. The " *Many* can confide to the *Few* those rights only, " which they respectively possess in themselves. " To confer a power of death, then, should seem " to imply *a right of suicide*." I declare myself unable to detect any manner of sophistry, in such a syllogism.

SCENE IV.

Cæsar. Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death, but once—
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come, when it will come.

The philosophy of death is well enough argued here, according to the old Stoical doctrine of fate, or predestination. This should seem to be a good notion for a mere soldier; but yet we do not find, in the late *carnage* †, that it rendered the Turks braver, who believe in it, than it did the Russians, who do not.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Cæsar speaks a sentence here, which shews him to have been worthy of a better fate.

When Artemidorus, upon seeing the number of papers presented to him on his march to the capitol, cries out,

* Series of Letters between Henry and Frances.
† The war between the Czarina and the Porte.

O, Cæsar,

O, Cæſar, read mine firſt; for mine's a ſuit,
That touches Cæſar nearer—Read it, great Cæſar—

he replies, in the true ſpirit of a prince,

What touches us ourſelf, ſhall be laſt ſerved.

And afterwards, when Metellus Cimber pleads for the repeal of his brother's baniſhment, he anſwers him with the proper ſteadineſs of a perſon intruſted with the executive province of a legiſlature,

I muſt prevent thee, Cimber—
Theſe couchings and theſe lowly curteſies
Might ſtir * the blood of ordinary men,
And turn pre-ordinance and firſt decree
Into the law † of children. Be not fond ‡
To think that Cæſar bears ſuch rebel blood,
That will be thawed from the true quality,
With that which melteth fools; I mean ſweet words,
Low crooked curteſies, and baſe ſpaniel-fawning—
Thy brother by decree is baniſhed;
If thou doſt bend, and pray, and fawn, for him,
I ſpurn thee, like a cur, out of my way—
Know Cæſar doth not wrong; nor without cauſe
Will he be ſatisfied.

I cannot help thinking, that the Poet has not given either Cæſar fair play for his life, or Brutus for his character, in bringing on the aſſaſſination ſo immediately after the one has uttered, and the other heard, the two foregoing ſpeeches.

The laſt ſentence above was not neceſſary to be quoted, for the purpoſe of the ſpeech, merely, as far as it had been ſpecified in the note which precedes it; but I confeſs that I was anxious to produce it, in order to take an opportunity of vindi-

* *Stir*, inſtead of *fire*. Warburton.

† *Law*, inſtead of *lane*. *Of children*, whoſe minds are eaſily wrought on. Johnſon.

‡ Be not ſo weakly perſuaded.

cating

cating our Author from an absurdity of expression, which has been so disingenuously imputed to him by his rival, Ben Johnson, who charges him with having wrote that passage thus:

"Cæsar never did *wrong*, but with *just cause*."

Now, *O rare Ben Johnson* *, what manner of foundation could'st thou have for such a sarcasm, except in the envious malice of thine own nature? for the very copy from which the present text is taken, was published in thine own life-time.

Or, suppose that the line had really stood as Johnson has pretended to have quoted it, might not any candid critic, who was at all versed in the latitude of expression generally made use of by Shakespeare, have sufficiently obviated the contradiction in the terms, by only construing the word *wrong*, into the sense of *injury?* for a penalty is certainly an *injury* †, though not a *wrong*.

I hope my Reader will not think this note to be any manner of interruption to the general tenor of these remarks, as he must acknowledge that there is a proper moral in defending the Author of this great code of Ethics, from any aspersion thrown out against his sense, meaning, or character.

* * *

In the last passage of this Scene, the two principal patriots, Brutus and Cassius, shew a noble spirit, in not endeavouring to support themselves after the deed by *faction*, in the common sense of the word, trusting solely to the justice and policy they had presumed in the act itself, for their security and defence.

* The epithet by which he is characterised on his tomb.
† In the sense of *hurt*, or *detriment*.

Cassius,

Caſſius, ſpeaking to Publius, who was preſent at the tranſaction, but not any way concerned in the conſpiracy, ſays,

Leave us, Publius, leſt that the people,
Ruſhing on us, ſhould do your age ſome miſchief.
Brutus. Do ſo; and let no man abide this deed,
But we the doers.

SCENE II.

Beſides that inward complacency which a virtuous perſon is ſenſible of in the conſciouſneſs of his merits, there is ſomething further in human nature which prompts his reflection forward to the fame which may attend his actions in future times. Our Author has placed this incitement in the ſtrongeſt light, by delivering the ſentiment from the confeſſion of two ſuch ſtoical interlocutors as the following:

Caſſius. How many ages hence,
Shall this our lofty ſcene be acted o'er,
In ſtates unborn, and accents yet unknown!
Brutus. How many times ſhall Cæſar bleed in ſport,
That now on Pompey's baſis lies along,
No worthier than the duſt!
Caſſius. So oft as that ſhall be,
So often ſhall the knot of us be called
The men that gave their Country liberty.

SCENE III.

Antony, *on ſeeing the body of Cæſar.*

O, mighty Cæſar! do'ſt thou lie ſo low!
Are all thy conqueſts, glories, triumphs, ſpoils,
Shrunk to this little meaſure?

The above exclamation is a dirge which may be juſtly pronounced over the graves of all heroes or other great men, whoſe fame is not founded in virtue.

* * *

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

As the following description falls under the head of Character, for which I have long since opened an account in these remarks, as relative to manners, at least, but often to morals, I shall present it to the Reader; who must have made but little observation on life, if it does not bring many resemblances of the same picture into his mind.

Antony and Octavius, speaking of Lepidus, whom they had just dispatched to bring them Cæsar's will:

Antony. This is a slight unmeritable man,
Meet to be sent on errands.
Octavius. But he's a tried and valiant soldier.
Antony. So is my horse, Octavius; and, for that,
I do appoint him store of provender.
It is a creature that I teach to fight,
To wind, to stop, to run directly on;
His corporal motion governed by my spirit;
And in some taste is Lepidus but so—
He must be taught, and trained, and bid go forth;
A barren-spirited fellow, one that feeds
On abject orts *, and imitations;
Which out of use, and staled † by other men,
Begin his fashion. Do not talk of him,
But as a property.

SCENE II.

The following passage may be added to the many instances of our Author's knowledge of human nature, collected from his close observations on mankind.

* *Orts, refuse, scraps*, or *lumber*, of philosophy or literature.
† Become vulgar and common-place.

Brutus,

Brutus, having ſent Lucilius to Caſſius, upon ſome friendly or confederate buſineſs between them, aſks him on his return,

A word, Lucilius;
How he received you, let me be reſolved.
Lucilius. With courteſy, and with reſpect enough;
But not with ſuch familiar inſtances,
Nor with ſuch free and friendly conference,
As he hath uſed of old.
Brutus. Thou haſt deſcribed
A hot friend cooling. Ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to ſicken and decay,
It uſeth an enforced ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and ſimple faith;
But hollow men, like horſes hot at hand,
Make gallant ſhew, and promiſe of their mettle;
But when they ſhould endure the bloody ſpur,
They fall their creſt, and, like deceitful jades,
Sink in the trial.

SCENE V.

Brutus, on hearing of his wife's death:

Why, farewel, Portia. We muſt die, Meſſala.
With meditating that ſhe muſt die once,
I have the patience to endure it now.
Caſſius. I have as much of this, in art, as you,
But yet my nature could not bear it ſo.

Here Brutus ſpeaks like *a Stoic*, and Caſſius like *a Man*. Such inſtances of apathy are not captivating.

A little after he ſays,

The deep of night is crept upon our talk,
And Nature muſt obey neceſſity,
Which we will niggard with a little reſt.

Now, pray, why ſhould Nature be more obedient to neceſſity in *ſleeping* than in *weeping?* She has her courſe in both, let proud man boaſt what he will.

A modern

A modern writer asks very justly, *Why we should be more ashamed of weeping than of laughing? The first emotion*, says he, *arises from nobler motives, and more generous principles.* Man has been defined to be a *risible animal.* Methinks it would be more for the honour of his nature to have been styled a *lachrymate one*, understanding the expression in a moral sense, by distinguishing between the effect of *pain* and *grief.*

Further on, in the same Scene, the critical contingencies of human life are finely illustrated by an apt and beautiful simile.

Brutus. There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows, and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now a-float,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our venture.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Brutus. O that a man might know
The end of this day's business, ere it come!
But it sufficeth that the day will end;
And then the end is known.

Here the disciple of Zeno *, being *off his guard*, betrays a portion of human frailty, in his curiosity and anxiety about the event of the battle; but upon *recollecting* his philosophy, he recovers himself to his *posture of defence* again. Such pretenders are but *performers* †, when closely examined.

* Father of the Stoic philosophy.
† *Actors of parts.*

SCENE

SCENE V.

When Caſſius has killed himſelf, through deſpair, from his having miſtaken the appearances of an action which had turned out in his favour, our author makes a juſt reflection upon the fatal effects of error and precipitancy.

Meſſala. Miſtruſt of good ſucceſs hath done this deed.
Oh, hateful Error, Melancholy's child;
Why doſt thou ſhew to the apt * thoughts of men
The things that are not? O Error, ſoon conceived,
Thou never com'ſt unto a happy birth,
But kill'ſt the mother that engender'd thee.

SCENE IX.

I ſhall here conclude my remarks upon this Play, with that fine character which Antony draws of Brutus, in the generous elogy he makes upon his death.

This was the nobleſt Roman of them all—
All the conſpirators, ſave only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Cæſar;
He, only, in a general honeſt thought,
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might ſtand up,
And ſay to all the world—*This was a man.*

POSTSCRIPT.

The aſſaſſination of Cæſar is a fact famous in hiſtory; but notwithſtanding the heroic opinion which the world has been taught to conceive of it, I confeſs that I have ever reputed its *fame* as a matter of *notoriety* rather than of *applauſe*.

* *Apt* for *quick*, *credulous*, *eaſily alarmed*.

I ſhall

I ſhall only conſider this action in the perſon of Brutus alone, becauſe it has been thought that he was the only one among the conſpirators who had engaged in it upon principle ſolely, as Antony has ſaid above.

Plutarch has debated this ſubject, in his compariſon of Brutus with Dion; and, in my opinion, ſeems to condemn it, upon the whole. At leaſt, if we take in the character he there draws of Cæſar, with the ſtate and circumſtances of the Commonwealth at that political criſis, it plainly appears that he meant to declare againſt it.

His words are: "With reſpect to Cæſar, "though, whilſt his imperial power was in its "infancy, he treated his opponents with ſeverity; "yet, as ſoon as that power was confirmed, the "tyranny was rather a *nominal*, than a *real* thing; "for no tyrannical action could be laid to his "charge. Nay, ſuch was the condition of Rome "then, that it evidently required a *maſter*; and "Cæſar was no more than *a tender and ſkilful* "*phyſician, appointed by Providence to heal the* "*diſtempers of the ſtate.* Of courſe the people "lamented his death, and were implacably en-"raged againſt his *aſſaſſins.*"

Cowley, in his fine Ode to Brutus, brings heavy charges alſo againſt him, on account of this action; though he ſeems only to do ſo, in order to vindicate him from them. But then he does not pretend to defend him, from the facts themſelves, juſtifying him only upon the higher principle which had rendered him *guilty* of them.

However, I think that he is ſeverer upon his hero even than Plutarch, by mentioning that weak and unphiloſophic exclamation of his, where he ſays,

says, *he had mistaken virtue for a good, but found it only a name.*

" What can we say, but thine own tragic word?
" That *virtue*, which had worshipped been by thee,
" As the most solid *good*, and greatest *deity*,
" By this fatal proof became
" An *idol* only, and a *name*."

This circumstance his Biographer had favourably suffered to pass unnoticed; and of which Balzac says, " that Brutus seems to lament his disappoint-" ment here, *as if he was upbraiding a jilting* " *mistress*." If he had acted solely from *virtue*, he would not have complained that he had missed the *reward*.

But though the principle might have been ever so right, in itself, the action was certainly wrong, in him. There are duties involved in duties, sometimes, which may counteract each other, and thereby render what might be the *virtue* of one person, the *vice* of another. Many situations and cases of this kind may be proposed; but I shall not launch beyond my subject.

Brutus had many and great obligations to Cæsar. He owed him his life—nay, 'tis said, even his *first life* *; and had the lives of several of his friends saved also at his intercession. He had ever lived with him in the greatest intimacy, and on the footing of his *first friend*. Nay, Cæsar had created himself enemies, by his partiality towards him, in the preferring him to posts of profit and honour, which others, from their services, were better intitled to. One of these malecontents was Cassius, who from that very resentment became the first mover and principal actor in the conspiracy. And

* Cæsar had an amour with Servilia, the mother of Brutus, before his birth.

were

were all these obligations to be cancelled by one dash of the *Stoic's pen*?

Stoical virtues are not always *moral ones*. These metaphysical *braveries* (for I was wrong in calling them *virtues*) which exceed the feelings of humanity, have never, as I said before *, been able to inspire my mind with either admiration or esteem.

The sympathy of nature is wanting, and true philosophy has good reason to suspect every principle or motive of action to be sophisticate, that bears not this *original impression*.

* See first observation on Scene I. Act II. and another on first part of Scene V. Act IV.

ANTONY

AND

CLEOPATRA.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

M. ANTONY.
OCTAVIUS CÆSAR.
AGRIPPA.
MECÆNAS.
VENTIDIUS.
ENOBARBUS.
SEXTUS POMPEY.
MENAS.
MENOCRATES.
EROS.
SCARUS.
CLOWN.

WOMEN.

CLEOPATRA.
CHARMIAN, } her Women.
IRAS, }

ANTONY and CLEOPATRA.

ACT I. SCENE III.

THE uſefulneſs of liſtening to advice, and the expediency of bearing to be admoniſhed of our faults, are well recommended in this place.

Antony to the meſſenger from Rome, who ſeems to conceal ill tidings:

Speak to me home, mince not the general tongue;
Name Cleopatra as ſhe's called in Rome;
Rail thou in Fulvia's * phraſe, and taunt my faults,
With ſuch full licence as both truth and malice
Have power to utter—*Oh then we bring forth weeds,*
When our quick minds † lie ſtill! and our ill told us,
Is as our earing ‡.

In the ſame Scene, the uncertain and wavering mind of man is well deſcribed by Antony, upon hearing of his wife's death.

There's a great ſpirit gone! Thus did I deſire it.
What our contempts do often hurl from us,
We wiſh it ours again. The preſent pleaſure,
By revolution lowering, does become
The oppoſite of itſelf §. She's good, being gone;
The hand could pull her back, that ſhoved her on—
I muſt from this enchanting queen break off.
Ten thouſand harms more than the ills I know,
My idleneſs doth hatch.

* *Fulvia*, wife to Antony.
† *Minds*, inſtead of *Winds*. Warburton.
‡ *Earing* for *ripening*,
§ "The alluſion is to the ſun's diurnal courſe; which riſing in "the *eaſt*, and *by revolution lowering*, or ſetting in the *weſt*, "becomes the *oppoſite to itſelf*." Warburton.

SCENE V.

Here occurs one of those reflections which Shakespeare abounds in, upon the instability of popular favour; and the simile, by which he expresses himself, is admirably suited to the occasion.

Octavius. This common body,
Like to a vagabond * flag upon the stream,
Goes to and back, lacqueying † the varying tide,
To rot itself with motion.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Pompey, Menecrates.

Pompey. If the great gods be just, they shall assist
The deeds of justest men.
Menecrates. Know, worthy Pompey,
That when they do delay, they not deny,
Pompey. While we are suitors to their throne, decays
The thing we sue for ‡.
Menecrates. We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms; which the wise Powers
Deny us, for our good; so find we profit
By losing of our prayers.

The above passage needs no comment, except to observe upon the impatience of one of the speakers, and the resignation of the other. It has often surprized me to see the intemperance of mind which the generality of men are apt to betray, on the ordinary course of Providence, whenever it happens to run counter to their *interests*, or *inclinations* rather; as the sentiment of Menecrates de-

* *Vagabond* for *floating*.

† Comparing the flag fluctuating with the ebbing and flowing of the tide, to a page or *lacquey* following the motions of his master. Theobald.

‡ His meaning is, that *a gift may lose its value, before it is obtained.* Health and fortune, for instance, may come too late for enjoyment.

livere

livered above, renders the first expression doubtful. One would fancy that such people had never laughed at the story of *Xerxes whipping the sea!*

SCENE V.

The last passage in this Scene is descriptive of that natural curiosity with which jealous persons are usually affected, of enquiring anxiously into every article of mind or feature relative to their rivals.

Cleopatra, upon being informed of Antony's marriage with Octavia, having first struck the *messenger of ill news*, and drove him off the Scene, speaks thus to her women:

Lead me from hence—
I faint—Oh, Iras, Charmian—'Tis no matter—
Go to the fellow, good Alexas, bid him
Report the feature of Octavia; her years,
Her inclination *.—Let him not leave out
The colour of her hair. Bring me word, quickly—
[*Exit Alexas.*
Let him for ever go †—Let him not, Charmian,
Though he be painted one way like a *Gorgon*—
The other way's a *Mars*—Bid you Alexas
Bring word how tall she is—Pity me, Charmian,
But speak not to me ‡. Lead me to my chamber.

Queen Elizabeth, according to Sir James Melville's report, made the same kind of minute inquiries from him, about her rival, the queen of Scots.

SCENE VII.

On board Pompey's *vessel.* Pompey, Octavius, Antony, Lepidus, *and* Menas.

Menas *aside to* Pompey.

Wilt thou be lord of the whole world?
Pompey. How shall that be?

* Her character or natural disposition.
† Meaning Antony.
‡ This is natural. In great misfortunes we refuse comfort.

Menas. Thou art, if thou dar'ſt be, the earthly Jove;
Whate'er the ocean pales, or ſky inclips,
Is thine, if thou wilt ha't.

Pompey. Shew me which way.

Men. Theſe three world-ſharers, theſe competitors *,
Are in thy veſſel—Let me cut the cable,
And when we are put off, fall to their throats—
All then is thine.

Pompey. Ah, this thou ſhould'ſt have done,
And not have ſpoken on't—In me, 'tis villainy;
In thee 't had been good ſervice—Thou muſt know,
'Tis not my profit that does lead mine honour;
Mine honour, it—Repent that e'er thy tongue
Hath ſo betrayed thine act—Being done unknown,
I ſhould have found it afterwards well done;
But muſt condemn it now.

The dangerous ſalvo which men ſometimes apply to their conſciences, in profiting of *another*'s crime, at free coſt, as they imagine, is fully expoſed in this Scene. But, in morals, there is no difference between the *receiver* and the *thief*; and as *the wages of ſin* are pronounced to be *death*, in the Scripture ſenſe of the word, the delinquent who accepts the emoluments of vice, muſt expect to be included under the ſame ſentence.

* * *

ACT III. SCENE I.

Moral writers have been diſtinguiſhed into two claſſes of philoſophy; whereof one ſet of them are ſaid to elevate human nature to the rank of angels, while the other depreciates it to the vileneſs of thoſe, *who had once been ſo.* But our author repreſents it more impartially, neither inclining to one ſide or the other; for there is not, perhaps, a

* Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus.

virtue

virtue or a vice in mankind, which he has not pointed out to us, in the ſeveral characters he has occaſionally introduced into his general drama. In this Scene he has afforded us an inſtance in the latter predicament, by a deſcription of that invidiouſneſs with which men are apt to regard ſuperior merit in others; more eſpecially in thoſe talents, which they are ambitious of ſhining in themſelves.

When Silius adviſes Ventidius to compleat his conqueſt over the Parthians, in order to recommend himſelf the more eminently to the favour of Antony, his general, the old ſoldier makes a reply, which ſhews him not only to have been verſed in camps, but in courts alſo.

Oh, Silius, Silius,
I've done enough. A lower place, note well,
May make too great an act. For learn this, Silius,
Better to leave undone, than by our deed
Acquire too high a fame, when he we ſerve's away.
Cæſar * and Antony have ever won
More in their officer than perſon. Soſſius,
One of my place in Syria, his lieutenant,
For quick accumulation of renown,
Which he atchiev'd by th' minute, loſt his favour—
Who does i' th' wars more than his captain can,
Becomes his captain's captain; and ambition,
The ſoldier's virtue, rather makes choice of loſs,
Than gain which darkens him.
I could do more to do Antonius good,
But 'twould offend him; and in his offence
Should my performance periſh.

SCENE II.

Here follow two paſſages, which for elegance of thought, or beauty of expreſſion, it is not in the power of poetical imagery or language to exceed.

* Octavius Cæſar.

When Octavia is taking leave of her brother, Octavius Cæsar, with all the shews of a tender affection, Antony says,

The April's in her eyes. *It is love's spring,*
And these the showers to bring it on. Be chearful.

And afterwards, when she endeavours to speak to him, but cannot, her difficulty is thus described:

Antony. Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
Her heart inform her tongue—*the swan's down feather,*
That stands upon the swell at full of tide,
And neither way inclines.

SCENE V.

Octavius, upon seeing his sister returning in a private character to Rome, without having afforded him timely notice to send forth a proper retinue to escort her, says,

Nay, the dust
Should have ascended to the roof of Heaven,
Raised by your populous troops; but you are come
A market-maid to Rome; and have prevented
The ostentation of our love; *which, left unshewn,*
Is often left unloved.

There is something more to be understood, in this last sentiment than can be perceived on a careless perusal of it. A warm affection within, naturally inspires correspondent emotions without. These are a sort of *setting* of the jewel, which not only ornaments, but helps to preserve it. In all the refined passions, the *delicacy* of a sentiment insures our constancy, even more than the *strength* of it. The nice observances, the *petits soins*, which in such cases may be almost deemed *petites morales*, also, increase the mutual pleasures and confidences of love and friendship. They are the *comets* which feed the *sun*. Even virtue itself, all perfect as it is,

is, requires to be inſpirited by paſſion; for duties are but coldly performed, which are *but philoſophically* fulfilled.

Octavius *to his Siſter.*

Cheer your heart—
Be not you troubled with the time which drives
O'er your content theſe ſtrong neceſſities;
But let determined things to *deſtiny*
Hold unbewail'd their way.

Here is very good advice given, if by the word *deſtiny* be underſtood *Providence*; which muſt certainly have been what the Antients meant by it, whenever they had any meaning about it at all; for moſt of the heathens made uſe of the expreſſion, as too many Chriſtians often do of an higher one, without affixing any manner of determinate idea to it in their minds. But the old *wiſeacres* were not ſatisfied to leave nonſenſe where they found it; they picked up the common ſpeech, and elevated vulgar phraſes into philoſophical principles. Hence the doctrines, that *Nature* created the world, and that *Fate* governed it, &c.

SCENE VII.

Here follows a thought, which, though falſe in the ſentiment, is but too true in the practice; and which, therefore, all men ſhould be taught to be aware of.

Antony, taking leave of his friends, after his ſhameful flight at Actium:

Pray ye, look not ſad,
Nor make replies of loathneſs—Take the hint
Which my deſpair proclaims. *Let them be left,*
Which leave themſelves.

* * *

As my gentle Readers may expect to be treated with a little of the *All for Love* of Antony, in this Play, I shall here quote a passage relative to this subject, which we meet with in the present Scene.

When Cleopatra appears before him, after his defeat *, he addresses himself to her thus:

O, whither hast thou led me, Ægypt? See
How I convey my shame out of thine eyes,
[*Turning from her.*
By looking back on what I've left behind,
'Stroyed in dishonour.

Cleopatra. Oh, my lord, my lord—
Forgive my fearful sails; I little thought
You would have followed.

Antony. Ægypt, thou knew'st too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by th' string †,
And thou should'st tow me after. O'er my spirit,
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st; and that
Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods
Command me.

Cleopatra. Oh, pardon, pardon. [*Weeps.*

Antony. Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates
All that is won and lost—Give me a kiss—
Even this repays me.

Shakespeare, in the above instance, appears to have been more gallant than Milton, who does not suffer Adam to expostulate so mildly with Eve—

"Out of my sight, thou serpent." Book x. l. 867.

However, we are to consider the infinite difference between the worlds that were lost upon those occasions. But as I do not think that the first man was more excusable for following the advice, than the other was for pursuing the galley of his mistress, when such prizes were at stake, their resentment ought to have been expressed only against themselves.

* Which was occasioned by his quitting the sea-fight at Actium, to pursue Cleopatra's galley when it was sailing away.

† *Heart-string.*

SCENE

SCENE IX.

The natural connection and dependance of the inward upon the outward man, as it is here expressed, is well marked in this place.

When Antony, in a fit of despair, goes out to pen a personal challenge to Octavius, the following reflection is made:

Enobar. Yes, like enough; high-battled * Cæsar will
Unstate his happiness, and be staged to th' shew,
Against a sworder——*I see men's judgments are*
A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them,
To suffer all alike——That he should dream,
Knowing all measures, the full Cæsar will
Answer his emptiness!——Cæsar, thou hast subdued
His judgment too.

In this same Scene, Enobarbus, seeing the downfal of his master's fortunes, enters into debate with himself, whether he shall preserve his fidelity to him still, or shift about, and take part with the conqueror; in which soliloquy he seems fairly to give the preference to the nobler side of the question, in his argument, though he afterwards determines against it, in his conduct.

But 'tis usually so, in all deliberations of this sort; for virtue and vice are of such opposite natures, that there is no possibility of bringing them at all into comparison by any sophister whose judgment has not before been rendered partial and corrupt. So that in such cases, one may venture to pronounce, as the Poet does of women, that *they who deliberate are lost.*

Enobarbus. Mine honesty and I begin to square †;
The loyalty well held to fools, does make
Our faith mere folly——Yet he that can endure
To follow with allegiance a fall'n lord,

* Victorious. † To *square*, to *quarrel*, so used by Shakesp.

Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
And earns a place i' th' story *.

ACT IV. SCENE V.

When Antony is told that Enobarbus had gone over to the enemy, but left his chests and effects behind him, he says,

Go, Eros, send his treasure after—Do it—
Detain no jot, I charge thee—Write to him—
I will subscribe gentle adieus and greetings—
Say that I wish he never find more cause
To change a master. Oh, my fortunes have
Corrupted honest men! Dispatch, my Eros.

There is such an heroic liberality of soul expressed here, as must make one lament the misfortunes of the unhappy Antony, even at this distance of time—for the fact here represented, is taken from historical record. We may justly say of him, as the soldier does here, upon delivering the message to Enobarbus,

Your emperor continues still a Jove.

Antony was not only a braver and a greater, but a better man than his competitor for empire. Augustus was of a worthless, mean, jealous, and vengeful nature; tho' poets, and *some historians*, have deified him. But princes will have their flatterers. Milton has given one even to the *prince of darkness* †.

SCENE VI.

Here Enobarbus appears to have been equally struck with the generosity of his master, and his own vileness; upon which joint reflection he passes a very just sentence on himself.

I am alone the villain of the earth,
And feel I am so most. O, Antony,
Thou mine of bounty, how would'st thou have paid
My better service, when my turpitude
Thou dost so crown with gold! This blows ‡ my heart;

* In fame or history.
† See Beelzebub's compliments to Satan, Book III.
‡ For *swells*.

If

If ſwift thought break it not, a ſwifter mean
Shall out-ſtrike thought—But thought will do't, I feel.
I fight againſt thee!—*No, I will go ſeek*
Some ditch, where I may die; the foul'ſt beſt fits
My latter part of life.

SCENE VIII.

The contrition of Enobarbus was ſincere; for here the ſtrong ſenſe of his baſeneſs burſts his ſwoln heart:

O bear me witneſs, night!
Be witneſs to me, O thou bleſſed moon!
When men revolted ſhall upon record
Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did
Before thy face repent! . . . . . .
O ſovereign miſtreſs of true melancholy,
The poiſonous damp of night diſpunge upon me,
That life, a very rebel to my will,
May hang no longer on me *! O Antony,
Nobler than my revolt is infamous,
Forgive me in thine own particular;
But let the world rank me in regiſter,
A maſter-leaver, and a fugitive——
Oh Antony! Oh Antony! [*Dies.*

I ſhall not pretend to diſpute a knowledge of human nature with Shakeſpeare, but, if he had not given us a repreſentation of this character, I ſhould hardly have been brought to imagine that a breaſt capable of harbouring ſuch treachery and vileneſs, could ever, at the ſame time, have contained a ſpirit of ſo much honour, and ſo ſtrong a ſenſe of ſhame.

One of the centinels, upon ſeeing him ſink down on the ground, ſays to his companion, that he has fallen aſleep; but the other, who had overheard his ſoliloquy, replies, very juſtly,

Swoons, rather; *for ſo bad a prayer as his,*
Was never yet for ſleep.

SCENE XI.

In this place our Author deſcribes the viciſſi-

* I have left out a paſſage here, which only diſgraces this fine ſpeech.

tudes

tudes of life, and the quick ſhiftings of fortune, by an apt and beautiful ſimile.

Antony *and* Eros.

Antony. Eros, thou yet behold'ſt me.

Eros. Ay, noble lord.

Antony. Sometime, we ſee a cloud that's dragoniſh;
A vapour ſometimes like a bear, or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendant rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory,
With trees upon 't that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air. Thou'ſt ſeen theſe ſigns,
They are black Veſper's pageants.

Eros. Ay, my lord.

Ant. That which is now a horſe, ev'n with a thought,
The rack * diſſimns, and makes it indiſtinct,
As water is in water.

Eros. It does, my lord.

Antony. My good knave †, Eros, now thy captain is
Ev'n ſuch a body—Here I'm Antony,
Yet cannot hold this viſible ſhape, my knave.

The reſt of the ſpeech is affecting, but relates not to the deſcription.

ACT V. SCENE V.

We meet with nothing in this Act worth noting, except a ſpeech made by one of Shakeſpeare's *inſpired Clowns* in this Scene.

I know that a woman is a diſh for the Gods, if the Devil dreſs her not.

Milton's fine compliment to the ſex, is only This expreſſed with more politeneſs:

" O faireſt of creation, laſt and beſt
" Of all God's works!"

But the Clown's expreſſion has a peculiar propriety in it, here, as being applied to Cleopatra, whoſe vices had *demoniſed* ſuch diſtinguiſhed talents, and tranſcendent beauty, as her's.

* This word is explained in my laſt note on Act IV. of the Tempeſt; here it means only the diſſolution of a cloud.

† *Knave*, an old Engliſh expreſſion for a ſervant or attendant.

CYMBELINE.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

JACHIMO.
BELLARIUS.
GUIDERIUS.
ARVIRAGUS.
CLOTEN.
PISANIO.
LUCIUS.

WOMAN.

IMOGEN.

CYMBELINE.

ACT I. SCENE VIII.

WHEN the insidious Jachimo drops mysterious hints to the guileless Imogen, that he is possessed of some secret relative to her husband, which he hesitates to reveal, she urges him to the discovery of it, in these words:

You do seem to know
Something of me, or what concerns me. Pray you,
Since doubting things go ill often hurts more,
Than to be sure they do; for certainties,
Or are past remedies, or timely known
The remedy's then born; discover to me
What both you spur and stop.

The nature of the human mind is well shewn here; it presses still to know the worst of every apprehended evil; tho' not on account of the argument above proposed, which is rather ingenious than just; but merely to satisfy the impatience, and relieve the suspence of doubt. Providence has certainly a design, in every kind of impression it makes upon its creatures; and the reason that Imogen gives here, may, perhaps, be its true one, in this case; but what I contend for is, That such a reflection is not the real source of our curiosity upon these occasions. Philosophy may serve to govern our impulses, but is incapable of inspiring them.

ACT III. SCENE III.

The Reader will require no assistance to note the morality of the reflections in the following speech, as he goes along, and will also be able to recollect the several observations already made upon many similar

ſimilar ones on the ſame reconciling ſubject, in the foregoing part of this Work.

Bellarius, ſpeaking to his two pupils, Guiderius and Arviragus, concealed princes, as they are going a-hunting:

Now for our mountain ſport; up to yon hill,
Your legs are young; I tread theſe flats—Conſider,
When you above perceive me like a crow,
That it is *place*, which leſſens and ſets off.
And you may then revolve what tales I told you,
Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war,
Where ſervice is not ſervice, ſo being done,
But being ſo allow'd. To apprehend thus,
Draws us a profit from all things we ſee;
And often, to our comfort, ſhall we find
The ſharded beetle * in a ſafer hold,
Than is the full-winged eagle. Oh, this life
Is nobler than attending for a check;
Richer than doing nothing for a bauble †;
Prouder than ruſtling in unpaid-for ſilk—
Such gain the cap of him that makes them *fine*,
Yet keeps his book uncroſs'd ‡. No life to ours.

In the ſame Scene this ſubject is renewed again, by the ſame ſpeaker, with further inſtances and richer reflections.

Did you but know the city's uſuries,
And felt them knowingly; the art o' th' court,
As hard to leave, as keep; whoſe top to climb,
Is certain falling; or ſo ſlippery, that
The fear's as bad as falling; the toil of war,
A pain that ſeems to ſeek out danger,
I'th' name of fame and honour, which dies i'th ſearch,
And hath as oft a ſlanderous epitaph,
As record of fair act; nay, many time,

* *Shards* are clefts in timber, between which the beetle is hatched.

† Earning titles or ribbands by mean adulation or court ſubſerviency.

‡ *Unpaid.*

Doth

Doth ill deſerve, by doing well; what's worſe,
Muſt curt'ſy at the cenſure.

SCENE IV.

Piſanio, ſpeaking of ſlander, ſays,

Whoſe edge is ſharper than the ſword; whoſe tongue
Out-venoms all the worms of *Nile*; whoſe breath
Rides on the poſting winds, and doth belye
All corners of the world. Kings, queens, and ſtates,
Maids, matrons, nay, the ſecrets of the grave,
This viperous ſlander enters.

The above paſſage needs no comment, but what every Reader's experience, either in his own caſe or that of others, may enable him to ſupply.

In the ſame Scene, which is a foreſt, Imogen, upon reading her miſtaken huſband's mandate to Piſanio, requiring him to put her to death, on a preſumption of her having been falſe to his bed, thus exclaims:

Falſe to his bed! What is it to be falſe?
To lie in watch there, and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? If ſleep charge nature,
To break it with a fearful dream of him,
And cry myſelf awake? That's falſe to's bed! is't?

Nothing, in ſituation of circumſtance, in thought, or expreſſion, can exceed the beauty or tender effect of the above paſſage. It catches ſuch quick hold of our ſympathy, that we feel as if the ſcene was real, and are at once tranſported amidſt the gloom and ſilence of the foreſt, in ſpite of all the glare of the Theatre, and the loud applauſe of the audience. It is in ſuch inſtances as theſe, that Shakeſpeare has never yet been equalled, and can never be excelled. What a power of natural ſentiment muſt a man have been poſſeſſed of, who could ſo adequately expreſs that kind of ingenuous ſurprize upon ſuch a challenge, which none but a woman can poſſibly feel!

Shakeſpeare

Shakeſpeare could not only aſſume all characters, but even their ſexes too—The whole Scene is beautiful, but falls not within our rule to tranſcribe any more of it here. The Commentators are all dumb upon this fine paſſage—not ſilent in admiration, but frozen into ſcholaſtic apathy. One may ſay of ſuch cold critics on Shakeſpeare, what Addiſon does of lukewarm Chriſtians, "That *they want parts to be* "*devout*, and could as ſoon make an epic poem, as "a fervent prayer."

SCENE VII.

The following ſpeech includes too many different articles in it, to be comprehended under any one general head; but the Reader will note the ſeveral particulars of it, in the peruſal:

Imogen, in boy's cloaths, travelling alone through the foreſt, makes this ſoliloquy:

I ſee a man's life is a tedious * one.
I've tired myſelf; and for two nights together
Have made the ground my bed. *I ſhould be ſick,*
But that my reſolution helps me. Milford,
When from the mountain top *Piſanio* ſhewed thee,
Thou waſt within a ken. *O Jove*, I think,
Foundations fly the wretched. Such, I mean,
Where they ſhould be relieved. Two beggars told me
I could not miſs my way. Will poor folks lye,
That have affliction on them, *knowing 'tis*
A puniſhment, or trial? Yes; no wonder,
When rich ones ſcarce tell true. To lapſe in fulneſs,
Is ſorer than to lye in need; and falſehood
Is worſe in kings, than beggars. My dear lord!
Thou'rt one o'th' falſe ones—*Now I think on thee,*
My hunger's gone; but even before, I was
At point to ſeek for food. But what is this?
[*Seeing a cave.*
Here's a path to't—'Tis ſome ſavage hold;
It were beſt not call—I dare not call—Yet *famine,*

* *Tedious*, for *fatiguing*.

Ere

Ere clean it o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant—
Plenty and peace breed cowards; hardness ever
Of hardiness is mother.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

There is a true spirit of natural bravery expressed here. When Cloten meets Guiderius in the forest, and challenges him to yield himself a prisoner, he replies,

To whom? To thee! What art thou? Have not I
An arm as big as thine? A heart as big?
Thy words, I grant, are bigger; *for I wear not*
My dagger in my mouth---Say, what thou art,
Why I should yield to thee. . . . . .
Cloten. Art not afraid?
Guid. Those that I reverence, those I fear, the wise—
At fools I laugh, not fear them.

SCENE IV.

After *Guiderius* has slain *Cloten* in fight, his brother *Arviragus* says he envies him the action, and wishes for some such trial of danger to exercise his own spirit upon. On this occasion old Bellarius makes the following reflection:

O thou goddess,
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st,
In these two princely boys! They are as gentle,
As zephyrs blowing beneath the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,
Their royal blood enchaf'd, *as th' rudest wind,*
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to th' vale. 'Tis wonderful,
That an invisible instinct should frame them
To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,
Civility not seen from other; valour
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop,
As if it had been sowed.

The notion here expressed, is one of the many antient pieces of superstition that modern philosophy

phy has finally deſtroyed. The lion has long ſince loſt its inſtinct for princes, as well as for virgins. Human nature is the ſame throughout; it is education alone that diſtinguiſhes man from man. There are, indeed, great differences often obſervable between the talents and intellects of the ſpecies; but this diſtinction is remarked in *individuals* only, not in the *claſſes* of mankind.

SCENE V.

But though I diſpute the argument of *Bellarius* in the laſt Scene, I allow him perfectly right in this one, where, on giving order for the funeral of *Cloten*, he ſays,

He was a queen's ſon, boys;
And though he came our enemy, remember,
He was paid for that; though mean and mighty, rotting
Together, have one duſt, *yet reverence,*
That angel of the world, doth make diſtinction*
Of place 'twixt high and low. Our foe was princely,
And though you took his life, as being our foe,
Yet bury him as a prince.

* * *

As I do not meet with any thing further in this Play, for my purpoſe, except a few thoughts which are better expreſſed in former places already taken notice of, I ſhall here conclude my quotations and remarks on this piece.

* *Reverence*, or a due regard to ſubordination, keeps peace and order in the world. Johnſon.

TROILUS

AND

CRESSIDA.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

AGAMEMNON.
NESTOR.
ULYSSES.
ACHILLES.
ÆNEAS.
ALEXANDER, Squire to Cressida.

WOMAN.

CRESSIDA.

TROILUS and CRESSIDA.

ACT I. SCENE III.

THE description of Ajax in this Play is worth transcribing, as being humorous in itself, agreeing with the representation of him in the Iliad, and because it may be applied also in part to many, and in the whole to a few, medley characters that are frequently to be met with in life.

Alexander *to* Cressida.

This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions. He is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant; a man, into whom Nature hath so crouded humours, that his valour is crusted into folly, his folly sauced with discretion; there is no man hath a virtue, that he has not a glimpse of; nor any man an attaint, but he carries some stain of it. He is melancholy without cause, and merry against the hair; he hath the joints of every thing, but every thing so out of joint, that he is a gouty *Briareus*, many hands, and no use; or purblind *Argus*, all eyes, and no sight.

SCENE IV.

Cressida's speech here, in reference to her wooer Troilus, contains very just reflections and prudent maxims for the conduct of women, in the dangerous circumstance of love. What she says, would become the utterance of the most virtuous matron, though her own character in this speech is unluckily a bad one. But our Author's genius teemed so fertile in document, that he was unable to restrain its impulse, and coolly wait for a fit opportunity of adapting the speaker to the speech. Shakespeare's faults

faults arise from richness, not from poverty; they exceed, not fall short; his monsters never want a head, but have sometimes two.

Yet hold I off—Women are angels wooing?
Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.
That she beloved knows nought that knows not this,
Men prize the thing ungained more than it is.
That she * was never yet, that ever knew
Love got so sweet, as when desire did sue;
Therefore, this maxim out of love I teach,
Atchievement is command; ungained, beseech †.
Then though my heart's content ‡ firm love doth bear,
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.

SCENE V.

The following dialogue can hardly be thought too long, by those Readers who carefully attend to the several admirable reflections comprehended in it, upon the dilatory nature of great events, the necessity of patience and fortitude, with the expediency of deference and obedience to order and authority.

A Council held in the Grecian *Camp.*

Agamemnon. Princes,
What grief hath set the jaundice on your cheeks?
The ample proposition that hope makes,
In all designs begun on earth below,
Fails in the promised largeness. Checks and disasters
Grow in the veins of actions highest reared;
As knots by the conflux of meeting sap,
Infect the sound pine, and divert his grain,
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.]
Nor, princes, is it matter new to us,
That we come short of our suppose, so far,
That after seven years siege, yet *Troy* walls stand;
Sith every action that hath gone before,
Whereof we have record, trial did draw
Bias and thwart, not answering the aim,

* *That she*, that is, the woman. † For *beseeching*.
‡ *Content*, for *capacity*. Warburton.]

And

And that *unbodied figure of the thought*,
That gav't ſurmiſed ſhape. Why, then, ye princes,
Do you with cheeks abaſhed behold our works?
And think them ſhame, which are, indeed, nought elſe
But the protractive trials of great Jove,
To find perſiſtive conſtancy in man?
The fineneſs of which metal is not found
In fortune's love; for then the bold and coward,
The wiſe and fool, the artiſt and unread,
The hard and ſoft, ſeem all affined, and kin;
But in the wind and tempeſt of her frown,
Diſtinction with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away;
And what hath maſs or matter by itſelf,
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.

Neſtor. In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men. The ſea being ſmooth,
How many ſhallow bauble boats dare ſail
Upon her patient breaſt, making their way
With thoſe of nobler bulk?
But let the ruffian *Boreas* once enrage
The gentle *Thetis*, and, anon, behold
The ſtrong-ribb'd bark, thro' liquid mountains cut,
Bounding between the two moiſt elements,
Like Perſeus' horſe *. Where's then the ſaucy boat,
Whoſe weak untimber'd ſides but even now
Co-rivall'd greatneſs?—Or to harbour fled,
Or made a toaſt for *Neptune*. Even ſo
Doth valour's ſhew, and valour's worth divide,
In ſtorms of fortune; for in her ray and brightneſs,
The herd hath more annoyance by the brize †
Than by the tyger; but when ſplitting winds
Make flexible the knees of knotted oaks,
And flies get under ſhade, why then, the thing of courage ‡,
As rouſed with rage, with rage doth ſympathize,
And with an accent tuned in ſelf-ſame key,
Returns to chiding fortune.

* When he rode through the air and clouds to reſcue *Andromeda*.
† *Brize*, the *gad-fly*.
‡ Sir Thomas Hanmer ſays, *from his own authority*, that tygers are fierceſt in high winds.

Ulysses. Troy, yet upon her basis, had been down,
And the great *Hector*'s sword had lack'd a master,
But for these instances.
The specialty of rule hath been neglected;
And look how many *Grecian* tents do stand
Hollow upon this plain, *so many hollow factions.*
When that the general is not like the hive,
To whom the foragers shall all repair,
What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded,
The unworthiest shews as fairly in the mask.
The heavens themselves, the planets, and this center,
Observe degree, priority and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office and custom, in all line of order.
And therefore is the glorious planet *Sol*
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered
Amidst the rest, whose med'cinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts, like the commandment of a king,
Sans check to good or bad. But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues, and what portents, what mutiny?
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,
Divest and crack, rend and deracinate
The unity and married calm of states,
Quite from their fixture? So when *degree* is shaken,
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
Then enterprize is sick. How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and * brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogeniture and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, scepters, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows! Each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy. The bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
And make a sop of all this solid globe;
Strength should be lord of imbecility,

* Corporate bodies.

And

And the rude ſon ſhould ſtrike his father dead;
Force ſhould be right; or rather right and wrong,
Between whoſe endleſs jar juſtice reſides,
Should loſe their names; and ſo ſhould juſtice too.
Then every thing include itſelf in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, an univerſal wolf,
So doubly ſeconded with will and power,
Muſt make, perforce, an univerſal prey,
And laſt eat up itſelf. Great *Agamemnon*,
This chaos, when degree is ſuffocate,
Follows the choking;
And this neglection of degree is it,
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpoſe
It has to climb. The general's diſdained
By him one ſtep below; he, by the next;
That next, by him beneath; ſo every ſtep,
Exampled by the firſt pace that is ſick
Of his ſuperior, grows to an envious fever
Of pale and bloodleſs * emulation.
And 'tis this fever that keeps *Troy* on foot,
Not her own ſinews. To end a tale of length,
Troy in our weakneſs lives, not in her ſtrength.

To which Ulyſſes, further on in the ſame Scene, adds,

They tax our policy, and call it cowardice;
Count wiſdom as no member of the war;
Foreſtall our preſcience, and eſteem no act
But that of hand—The ſtill and mental parts,
That do contrive how many hands ſhall ſtrike,
When fitneſs calls them on, and know the meaſure,
By their obſervant toil, of th' enemy's weight;
Why this hath not a finger's dignity;
They call this bed-work, mappery, cloſet-war—
So that the ram, that batters down the wall,
For the great ſwing and rudeneſs of its poize,
They place before his hand that made the engine;
Or thoſe, that with the fierceneſs of their ſouls,
By reaſon guide its execution.

* *Bloodleſs*, more malignant than active.

May I venture here to challenge any thing in the Iliad, where the ſame argument is deliberated upon by the ſame chiefs, (with Homer's gods to aſſiſt their counſels) to equal the juſtneſs of obſervation, the richneſs of imagery, and the copiouſneſs of reflection, preſented to us in this reſplendent paſſage? But, as I ſaid before, on a compariſon between Shakeſpeare and Sophocles, 'tis enough to determine the literary critics againſt me, that *one had written in Engliſh, and the other in Greek.*

SCENE VI.

In this place is given us a ſpecimen of the antient chivalry, as firſt inſpired by love and gallantry, and exerciſed in honour or defence of women. *Æneas*, attended by an herald, bringing a challenge from *Hector*, to any champion in the *Grecian* camp who will accept it, delivers himſelf thus:

Kings, princes, lords!
If there be one amongſt the fair'ſt of *Greece*,
That holds his honour higher than his eaſe,
That ſeeks his praiſe more than he fears his peril,
That knows his valour, and knows not his fear,
That loves his miſtreſs more than in profeſſion
With truant vows to her own lips he loves,
And dare avow her beauty and her worth,
In other arms than hers; to him this challenge—
Hector, in view of *Trojans* and of *Greeks*,
Shall make it good, or do his beſt to do it.
He hath a lady, wiſer, fairer, truer,
Than ever *Greek* did compaſs in his arms;
And will, to-morrow, with his trumpet, call,
Midway between your tents and wall of *Troy*,
To rouſe a *Grecian* that is true in love—
If any come, *Hector* ſhall honour him;
If none, he'll ſay in *Troy*, when he retires,
The *Grecian* dames are ſun-burned, and not worth
The ſplinter of a lance. Even ſo much.

To which *Agamemnon* replies:

This

This ſhall be told our lovers, lord *Æneas*—
If none of them have ſoul in ſuch a kind,
We've left them all at home. But we are ſoldiers;
And may that ſoldier a mere recreant prove,
That means not, hath not, or is not in love!
If then one is, or hath, or means to be,
That one meets *Hector*—if none elſe, I'm he.

Old *Neſtor*'s ſpeech upon this occaſion is well worth adding here, both for the humour of his expreſſions, and to compleat the idea of *knight-errantry*, in which profeſſion of arms, neither difference of age, or other imparity whatſoever, were allowed to be pleaded as exemptions, by the laws of ſuch romantic chivalry.

Tell him of *Neſtor*; one that was a man
When *Hector*'s grandſire ſuckt; he is old now,
But if there be not in our *Grecian* hoſt
One noble man that hath one ſpark of fire,
To anſwer for his love; tell him from me,
I'll hide my ſilver beard in a gold beaver,
And in my vantbrace* put this withered brawn,
And, meeting him, will tell him that my lady
Was fairer than his grandam, and as chaſte
As may be in the world---His youth in flood,
I'll pawn this truth with my three drops of blood.

ACT II. SCENE VIII.

The laſt paſſage in this Scene contains a good ſtricture againſt pride, though ſomewhat too quaintly expreſſed, in the firſt and laſt part of the propoſition.

Agamemnon. He that is proud, eats up himſelf. Pride is his own glaſs, his own trumpet, his own chronicle; and whatever praiſes itſelf but in the deed, devours the deed in the praiſe.

Of all the faults of men, their pride is apt to give us moſt offence; perhaps becauſe it hurts our own†.

* *Vantbrace*, a ſhield or buckler.

† I am not ſure but this has been ſaid by ſomebody elſe before.

ACT III. SCENE VII.

The following ſpeech may very well take *Ecce mundum* for its motto, as 'tis full of melancholy and mortifying truths. But I don't think the philoſophic and humiliating reflections it contains, become the character of the ſpeaker, as given us by Homer. Achilles, on ſeeing the Grecian chiefs paſs by his tent without taking notice of him, ſays to Patroclus,

What! am I poor of late?
'Tis certain, greatneſs once fallen out with fortune,
Muſt fall out with men too; what the declined is,
He ſhall as ſoon read in the eyes of others,
As feel in his own fall; for men, like butterflies,
Shew not their mealy wings but to the ſummer;
And not a man, for being ſimply man,
Hath any honour, but honour by thoſe honours
That are without him; as place, riches, favour;
Prizes of accident, as oft as merit!
Which when they fall, as being ſlipp'ry ſtanders,
The love that leaned on them as ſlipp'ry too,
Doth one pluck down another, and together
Die in the fall.

In the latter end of the ſame Scene, the inveſtigating faculties neceſſary for a Miniſter, with the *arcana imperii*, or myſteries of government, are ſtrongly and poetically deſcribed.

Ulyſſes. The providence that's in a watchful ſtate,
Knows almoſt every grain of Pluto's gold †:
Finds bottom in th' incomprehenſive deep;
Keeps place with thought; and almoſt, like the gods,
Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.
There is a myſtery, with which relation ‡
Durſt never meddle, in the ſoul of ſtate;
Which hath an operation more divine,
Than breath or pen can give expreſſure to.

† Acquainted with all the reſources of trade, commerce, or finances.

‡ Recital, explanation, or comment.

ROMEO
AND
JULIET.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

ROMEO.
BENVOLIO.
FRIAR LAWRENCE.

WOMEN.

NONE.

ROMEO and JULIET.

WERE it my province to have selected the poetical beauties of our Author, there are few of his Plays that would have furnished me more amply than this. The language abounds with tenderness and delicacy, and seems to breathe the soul of youthful fondness; but neither the fable nor the dialogue can afford much assistance toward my present purpose; as the first is founded on a vicious prejudice unknown to the liberal minds of Britons, that of entailing family feuds and resentments down from generation to generation; and the second, as far, at least, as the lovers are concerned, though poetical and refined, is dictated more by passion than by sentiment.

But as my young Readers might not forgive my passing over this Play unnoticed, I shall just observe, that the catastrophe of the unhappy lovers seems intended as a kind of moral, as well as poetical justice, for their having ventured upon an unweighed engagement together, without the concurrence and consent of their parents. See my reflection on the first Scene, Act I. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where this duty and obedience is both enforced and restrained.

ACT I. SCENE II.

The first passage worthy of remark that occurs, is the following definition or description of that

paſſion, which, with reſpect to the generality of mankind, frames the happineſs or miſery of their lives.

Romeo *and* Benvolio.

Benvolio. Alas, that love, ſo gentle in his view,
Should be ſo tyrannous and rough in proof!

Romeo. Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
Oh, any thing of nothing firſt create!
O heavy lightneſs! ſerious vanity!
Miſhapen Chaos of well-ſeeming forms!
Feather of lead, bright ſmoke, cold fire, ſick health!
Still waking ſleep, that is not what it is! . . . .
Love is a ſmoke, raiſed with the fume of ſighs,
Being purged, a fire ſparkling in lover's eyes;
Being vext, a ſea nouriſh'd with lover's tears——
What is it elſe? A madneſs moſt diſcreet,
A choking gall, and a preſerving ſweet.

ACT II. SCENE III.

The allegory here, drawn from a compariſon of the qualities of herbs with the nature of man, is juſt, ingenious, and poetical.

Enter Friar Lawrence, with a baſket, in order to cull ſimples for medicinal uſes.

The grey-eyed morn ſmiles on the frowning night,
Check'ring the eaſtern clouds with ſtreaks of light;
And darkneſs fleckered, like a drunkard reels,
From forth day's path, and *Titan*'s burning wheels.
Now ere the ſun advance his burning eye,
The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,
I muſt fill up this oſier-cage of ours
With baneful weeds, and precious-juiced flowers.
The earth, that's Nature's mother, is her tomb;
What is her burying-grave, that is her womb;
And from her womb children of divers kind,
We ſucking on her natural boſom find;
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for ſome, and yet all different.

O, mickle

O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
In plants, herbs, ſtones, and their true qualities!
Nor nought ſo vile, that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth ſome ſpecial good doth give;
Nor aught ſo good, but, ſtrained from that fair uſe,
Revolts from true birth, ſtumbling on abuſe.
Virtue itſelf turns vice, being miſapplied,
And vice ſometimes by action's dignified.
Within the infant rind of this ſmall flower,
Poiſon hath reſidence, and medicine power;
For this being ſmelt, with that ſenſe cheers each part;
Being taſted, ſlays all ſenſes with the heart.
Two ſuch oppoſed foes encamp them ſtill,
In man, as well as herbs, grace and rude will;
And where the worſer is predominant,
Full-ſoon the canker death eats up that plant.

In the ſame Scene, when *Romeo* comes to acquaint the *Friar* that his former flame for the fair *Roſaline* is extinct *, and a new one, for Juliet, like another *phœnix*, had ariſen out of its aſhes, the honeſt prieſt thus exclaims:

Holy *St. Francis*, what a change is here!
Is *Roſaline*, whom thou didſt love ſo dear,
So ſoon forſaken? Young men's love then lies,
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
Holy *St. Francis!* What a deal of brine
Hath waſhed thy ſallow cheeks for *Roſaline!*
How much ſalt-water thrown away in waſte
To ſeaſon love, that of it doth not taſte!
The ſun not yet thy ſighs from Heaven clears,
Thy old groans ring yet in my antient ears;
Lo, here upon thy cheek the ſtain doth ſit
Of an old tear, that is not waſhed off yet—
If e'er thou waſt thyſelf, and theſe woes thine,
Thou and theſe woes were all for *Roſaline.*
And art thou changed? Pronounce this ſentence, then,
Women may fall, when there's no ſtrength in men.

* This hint of Romeo's infidelity is left out, in the modern repreſentation of this Play.

With

With this very just reflection I shall here conclude my notes upon this Play; the remainder of it affording but little matter for further observation, being mostly action, narration, and confusion. But if my Readers should require some apology to be made for the quick conception of passion in the character of Juliet, I must refer them to my Preface to Scene IV. Act I. of *The Taming of the Shrew.*

HAMLET.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

HAMLET.
KING.
POLONIUS.
LAERTES.
HORATIO.
ROSINCRANTZ.
REYNOLDO.

WOMEN.

QUEEN.
OPHELIA.
PLAYERS.

HAMLET.

ACT I. SCENE II.

IF reaſoning could controul our grief, the King and Queen offer ſufficient arguments to Hamlet in this Scene, to moderate his.

Good Hamlet, caſt thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eyes look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not, for ever, with thy veiled lids,
Seek for thy noble father in the duſt;
Thou know'ſt 'tis common; all that live muſt die,
Paſſing through nature to eternity.

The King then takes up the ſubject, and enlarges on it.

'Tis ſweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give theſe mourning duties to your father;
But you muſt know your father loſt a father,
That father his, and the ſurvivor bound
In filial obligation for ſome term,
To do obſequious* ſorrow. But to perſevere
In obſtinate condolement †, is a courſe
Of impious ſtubbornneſs, unmanly grief;
It ſhews a will moſt incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An underſtanding ſimple and unſchool'd;
For what we know muſt be, and is as common
As any the moſt vulgar thing to ſenſe,
Why ſhould we, in our peeviſh oppoſition,
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault againſt the dead, a fault to nature,
To reaſon moſt abſurd; whoſe common theme

* The word here is framed from *obſequies*, or *funeral rites*. Johnſon.

† *Condolement*, for *ſorrow*, becauſe it requires *condolement*. Warburton.

Is death of fathers; and who ſtill have cryed,
From the firſt corſe 'till he that died to-day,
This muſt be ſo.

SCENE V.

In this Scene, Laertes gives moſt excellent advice and *matronly* caution to his ſiſter, upon the ſubject of Hamlet's addeſſes to her.

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a faſhion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent; tho' ſweet, not laſting;
The perfume and ſuppliance of a minute—
No more. . . . Think it no more.
For Nature, creſcent, does not grow alone
In thews * and bulk; but as this temple waxes,
The inward ſervice of the mind and ſoul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now;
And now no ſoil nor cautel † doth beſmirch
The virtue of his will; but you muſt fear. . . .
Then weigh what loſs your honour may ſuſtain,
If with too credent ear you liſt his ſongs;
Or loſe your heart, or your chaſte treaſure open
To his unmaſtered importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia; fear it, my dear ſiſter;
And keep within the rear of your affection,
Out of the ſhot and danger of deſire.
The charieſt maid is prodigal enough,
If ſhe unmaſk her beauty to the moon;
Virtue itſelf 'ſcapes not calumnious ſtrokes;
The canker galls the infants of the ſpring,
Too oft before their buttons ‡ be diſcloſed;
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth,
Contagious blaſtments are moſt eminent—
Be wary, then, beſt ſafety lies in fear;
Youth to itſelf rebels, though none elſe near.

* *Thews and bulk*, ſynonimous.

† *Cautel.* This word, from the Latin *cautela*, ſignifies ſimply *caution*, but by the abuſe of language is brought here to mean *deceit.*

‡ *Buttons*, the *buds*, or *germens* of a plant.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

Polonius, on his ſon's going to travel, gives him admirable rules and inſtructions for his conduct in life.

My bleſſing with you;
And theſe few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar;
The friends thou haſt, and their adoption tryed,
Grapple them to thy ſoul with claſps of ſteel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear't that th' oppoſer may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's cenſure, but reſerve thy judgment.
Coſtly thy habit as thy purſe can buy,
But not expreſſed in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
For the apparel oft proclaims the man. . . .
Neither a borrower, nor a lender be;
For borrowing dulls the edge of huſbandry,
And loan oft loſes both itſelf and friends *.
This above all—To thine own ſelf be true;
And it muſt follow, as the light the day †,
Thou can'ſt not then be falſe to any man.

In the continuation of this Scene, *Polonius* renews the ſame topic with his daughter, that her brother had begun with her in the former, which is urged with higher authority, and enforced by additional arguments. I ſhall give the dialogue as it ſtands.

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, *he* hath ſaid to you? [*Laertes*
Oph. So pleaſe you, ſomething touching the lord *Hamlet*.

* I have ventured to tranſpoſe theſe two lines, to avoid confuſion in the argument.

† The text ſays the *night* the day——Warburton has made the alteration, much to the advantage of the paſſage.

Pol.

Pol. Marry, well bethought!
'Tis told me he hath very oft, of late,
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution, I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly,
As it behoves my daughter, and your honour.
What is between you, give me up the truth.
Oph. He hath, my lord, of late, made many tenders
Of his affection to me.
Pol. Affection! Pugh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his *tenders*, as you call them?
Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.
Pol. Marry, I'll teach you. Think yourself a baby,
That you have ta'en his *tenders* for true pay,
Which are not sterling. *Tender* yourself more dearly;
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wronging it thus) you'll *tender* me a fool.
Oph. My lord, he hath importuned me with love,
In honourable fashion.
Pol. Ay, fashion you call't—Go to, go to.
Oph. And hath giv'n countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of Heaven.
Pol. *Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.* I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows. These blazes, oh my daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Ev'n in the promise as it is a making,
You must not take for fire. From this time,
Be somewhat scantier of thy maiden presence,
Set your intreatments at an higher rate,
Than a command to parley. For lord *Hamlet*,
Believe so much in him, that he is young;
And with a larger tether* he may walk,
Than may be given you. In few, *Ophelia*,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,
Not of that die which their investments shew,

* With a freer scope.

But

But mere implorers of unholy ſuits,
Breathing like ſanctified and pious bawds †,
The better to beguile. This is for all—
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you ſo ſlander any moment's leiſure,
As to give words or talk with the lord *Hamlet*.
Look to't, I charge you.

SCENE VII.

I ſhall here quote what *Hamlet* ſays againſt the vice of drinking, as it may ſuit the latitude of England, as well as that of Denmark.

Horatio. Is it a cuſtom?
Hamlet. Ay, marry, is't:
But, to my mind, though I am native here,
And to the manner born, it is a cuſtom
More honoured in the breach, than the obſervance.
This *heavy-headed revel*, eaſt and weſt,
Makes us traduced, and taxed of other nations;
They clepe us drunkards, and with ſwiniſh phraſe
Soil our addition; and, indeed, it takes
From our achievements, though performed at height,
The pith and marrow of our atribute *.

From hence the ſpeaker takes occaſion to extend his reflection in a general obſervation, which moſt people's experience may enable them to ſupport, that ſome accidental peculiarity of mind, of manners, nay, even of features, have often hurt the characters, and marred the fortunes of particular perſons of intrinſic worth and merit.

So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for ſome vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth, wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot chuſe his origin,

† *Bawds*, inſtead of *bands*. Theobald. This alteration gives an obvious ſenſe to the paſſage, and ſaves the expence of a comment, with which a text ſhould never be encumbered, unleſs it may no otherwiſe be rendered intelligible.

* As our natural bravery is often imputed to our *pot-valiantry*.

By

By the o'er-growth of ſome complexion †,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reaſon;
Or by ſome habit, that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plauſive manners; that theſe men
Carrying, I ſay, the ſtamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's ſcar,
Their virtues elſe, be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo,
Shall in the general cenſure take corruption,
From that particular fault. *The dram of baſe*
Doth all the noble ſubſtance of worth out,
To his own ſcandal ‡.

SCENE VIII.

There is ſomething extremely remarkable and pleaſing, in the following part of the Ghoſt's ſpeech to Hamlet, here.

But howſoever thou purſu'ſt this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy ſoul contrive
Againſt thy mother aught; leave her to Heaven,
And to thoſe thorns that in her boſom lodge
To prick and ſting her.

He repeats the ſame fond caution to him again, in Act III. Scene X.

But, look! Amazement on thy mother ſits;
O ſtep between her and her fighting ſoul;
Conceit in weakeſt bodies ſtrongeſt works—
Speak to her, *Hamlet.*

No Eaſtern ſentiment, inſpired by the firſt beams of the Sun, and refined by the ſublimeſt morality of Confucius, ever roſe to ſo high a pitch, as the tenderneſs expreſſed in theſe two paſſages toward his wife—even after her crimes. Have either the

† Conſtitutional predominance.

‡ I ſhall leave the Reader to interpret this laſt paſſage to himſelf; for though Theobald has amended the text, ſo as to hint the meaning, the ſenſe of it is ſtill left imperfect in the expreſſion.

Greek

Greek or Latin maſters of the Epic afforded us ſo beautiful an inſtance of forgiveneſs, and of love ſubſiſting even beyond the grave? They have both of them preſented us with ſcenes after death; but compare the behaviour of *Dido*, upon meeting *Æneas* in the Elyſian fields, with this, as being the moſt parallel paſſage I can recollect. He had not been any thing near ſo culpable towards her, as this queen had been to her huſband; and yet the utmoſt temper that the *heathen* Poet could bring his Ghoſt to, upon that occaſion, was, merely to be ſilent, an not upbraid, *in ſpeech*; though he makes her ſufficiently mark her reſentment, by her *looks and behaviour*.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Here *Polonius* gives ſome inſtructions to a perſon he is ſending over to carry money to his ſon at Paris; in which, though he requires him to ſift narrowly into the manner of life, company, and converſation of *Laertes*, yet he does it with ſo becoming a tenderneſs and paternal reſpect to the character of the young man, as is extremely intereſting and engaging.

Polonius *and* Reynoldo.

Pol. You ſhall do marvellous wiſely, good Reynoldo,
Before you viſit him, to make inquiry
Of his behaviour.

Reyn. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well ſaid—very well ſaid—Look you, Sir,
Inquire me firſt, what *Danſkers** are in Paris—
And how, and who—what means—and where they keep:
What company; at what expence; and finding,
By this encompaſſment and drift of queſtion,
That they do know my ſon, come you more near;
Then your particular demands will touch it—
Take you, as 'twere, ſome diſtant knowledge of him;

* *Danes.*

As

As thus: I know his father, and his friends,
And, in part, him—Do you mark this, Reynoldo?

Reyn. Ay, very well, my lord.

Pol. *And, in part, him*—But you may say, not well;
But if 't be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so—And there put on him
What forgeries you please—*Marry, none so rank,*
As may dishonour him—Take heed of that—
But, Sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips,
As are companions noted, and most known
To youth and liberty. . . . . .

SCENE II.

Pol. It seems it is as proper to our age,
To cast beyond ourselves, in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort,
To lack discretion.

Upon this reflection, Doctor *Johnson* says, "*This is not the remark of a weak man.*" It is not, indeed; but why should *Polonius* be deemed so? He certainly speaks very good sense throughout, though with the natural and *respectable* mixture of the old man in it; which, methinks, as Addison says of *Cornaro's* † stile, is an improvement to it. As to the manner in which he describes Hamlet's madness, in Scene IV. following, I take it to be only designed by *Shakespeare* in ridicule of the old pedantic mode of definitions, or quaint distinctions, in logic and philosophy; the *categories, predicaments,* and *predicables* of *the Schools,* used in those times. There are many instances of the same oblique strictures, upon other subjects, in our Author; I have therefore, ever thought this character mistaken, and, consequently, misrepresented upon the stage, by its being generally given to a comic actor.

† He wrote a treatise on *health and long life,* at fourscore, commended in the Spectator, No. 195.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE II.

The famous soliloquy of Hamlet, here, *To be, or not to be*, is so generally remembered, and has been so often remarked upon, that I might possibly be thought guilty of a neglect, in passing it by without a comment. But the subject is a hazardous one, and therefore had better not be meddled with. It might, perhaps, bear a discussion in philosophy, but religion forbids any manner of debate upon it.

SCENE III.

Shakespeare not only affords documents to real life, but supplies them even to the mimic one; as may be seen in this Scene, where he makes *Hamlet* give instructions to Actors how they should perform their parts. But as there is no moral to be extracted from the passage, I shall not quote it here.

But all these rules, however excellent in themselves, may be considered rather as strictures on bad performers, than precepts for their reformation. Actors, like Poets, must be born, not made; and *a receipt to form an Actor*, may be considered in the same light with the one *to frame an Epic Poem*. It is not so much for want of *notion*, as of *Nature*, that so many of the *Dramatis Personæ* are found to be deficient in the expression of sentiment, and representation of character.

Talents are as necessary to Actors, as *Genius* is to Authors; if I may be allowed such a distinction of terms—but neither are to be acquired in the schools. All Mr. Garrick's *art*, without his *nature*, would produce no effect, as may be seen in the many who have *laboriously*, but vainly attempted to copy him. I have known persons capable of writing a part, who were incapable of performing

performing it. Our Author himself was an instance of this inconsistency; who, though he formed the *rule*, could not supply the *example*.

SCENE VI.

In the Strollers' play here introduced, where the Lady is said *to protest too much*, the speech which the Duke her husband makes upon that occasion, shews a perfect knowledge in the mind and manners of human nature.

I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break;
Purpose is but the slave of memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity;
Which now, like fruits unripe, sticks on the tree,
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt*;
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending doth the purpose lose;
The violence of either grief or joy,
Their own enactures with themselves destroy.
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament,
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
The world is not for aye, nor is it strange,
That e'en our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love leads fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his fav'rite flies;
The poor advanced, makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run,
That our devices still are over-thrown,
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.

* This sentiment is improperly expressed; but the meaning of the passage is, that we think we may remit engagements made only to ourselves, without a strain of conscience.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

There is ſomething very affecting in the ſelf-expoſtulation entered into by *Hamlet*, in this place, juſt before he proceeds to hold the conference with his mother:

Soft; now to my mother—
O heart, loſe not thy nature; let not ever
The ſoul of *Nero* enter this firm boſom;
Let me be cruel *, but not unnatural;
I will ſpeak daggers to her, but uſe none.
My tongue and ſoul in this be hypocrites;
How in my words ſoever ſhe be ſhent †,
To give them ſeals ‡, never my ſoul conſent!

The filial tenderneſs here expreſſed towards her, is in the ſame generous ſtrain with the conjugal one before taken notice of, in the Ghoſt's ſpeech; *But howſoever thou purſueſt this act*, &c.

SCENE VIII.

Upon the King's expreſſing an apprehenſion of ſome commotion in the State, which might ariſe from *Hamlet*'s madneſs, Roſincrantz makes the following ſpeech:

The ſingle and peculiar life is bound,
With all the ſtrength and armour of the mind,
To keep itſelf from noyance; but much more,
The ſpirit on whoſe weal depends and reſts
The lives of many. The ceaſe of majeſty
Dies not alone, but, like a gulph, doth draw
What's near it with it. 'Tis a maſſy wheel,
Fixt on the ſummit of the higheſt mount,
To whoſe huge ſpokes ten thouſand leſſer things
Are mortiſed and adjoined; which, when it falls,
Each ſmall annexment, petty conſequence,
Attends the boiſterous ruin. Ne'er alone
Did the king ſigh; but with a general groan.

* *Cruel*, for *ſevere*. † *Shent*, *ſentenced*, or *condemned*.
‡ To give them warrant or authority to execute juſtice.

The reflections in the above speech contain a very just and political moral in them; which ought to be opposed to all rebellious motions that may ever arise in the minds of a discontented people. If, after such a pause of deliberation, it shall fail of producing its proper effect, there must be sufficient cause to suspect, that the private advantage of individuals is more intended than the general one of the community. I do not mean to plead here for the old and justly exploded doctrines of *passive obedience* and *non-resistance*; but only to hint a distinction between reason and resentment, between rebellion and defence.

The following speech in the same Scene will supply its own reflections and morals, without the assistance of a comment.

King. Oh! my offence is rank, it smells to heaven. . . .
Pray, I cannot,
Though inclination be as sharp as't will;
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, oh! what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!
That cannot be, since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardoned, and retain th' offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law — *But 'tis not so above:*

There

There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compelled,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can. *What can it not?*
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent*?
Oh wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
Oh limed soul, that struggling to be free,
Art more engaged! Help, angels! make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees! and heart, with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
All may be well——— [*Kneels.*

After some time he rises, and says,

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts will ne'er to Heaven go.

SCENE X.

In the latter end of the conference between Hamlet and his mother, he makes a speech, upon the power of custom, which should be engraved on our hearts, and be the matin soliloquy of our lives.

Good night; but go not to mine uncle's bed!
Assume a virtue, if you have it not;
That monster custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this;
That to the use of actions fair and good,
He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain, to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence; the next, more easy;
For use can almost change the stamp of nature,
And master ev'n the devil; or throw him out,
With wond'rous potency.

* That is, shew their penitence sincere by making *restitution.*

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

The following ſpeech of Hamlet contains a very philoſophic reflection, and is the proper ſentiment of men who are not *brutes* in their nature, and deſerve to periſh like them.

What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time,
Be but to ſleep and feed? A *beaſt*, no more.
Sure he that made us with ſuch large diſcourſe *,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reaſon,
To fuſt in us unuſed.

SCENE V.

When the Queen ſuffers Ophelia in her madneſs to be admitted to her preſence, leſt her pitiable condition might raiſe a tumult in the city, ſhe makes this ſoliloquy:

Let her come in----
To my ſick ſoul, as ſin's true nature is,
Each toy ſeems prologue to ſome great amiſs;
So full of artleſs jealouſy is guilt,
It ſpills itſelf, in fearing to be ſpilt ‡.

ACT V. SCENE IV.

Here follows the deſcription of an obſequious, empty, but impoſing character, ſuch as is frequently to be met with in life; moſtly in Courts, or among thoſe who, by a modern unmeaning title, are ſtiled, *The Ton*—*Vox et præterea nihil* ‖.

* With ſuch inveſtigating powers and faculties of reaſoning.

‡ A tainted conſcience, as the proverb ſays, in other words, is apt to betray itſelf.

‖ Virtue and vice, ſenſe and folly, are the only juſt, natural, or adequate differences in mankind. Theſe made the firſt diſtinctions between men, and ought ſtill to preſerve them.

Hamlet,

Hamlet, ſpeaking of Oſrick,

He did compliment with his dug before he ſucked it. Thus has he, and many more of the ſame breed, that I know the droſſy age dotes on, only got the *tune* of the time, and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yeſty* collection, which carries them thro' and thro' the moſt fanned and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trials, the bubbles are out.

In the ſame Scene, juſt before his going to engage with Laertes on the trial of ſkill, Hamlet hints at one of theſe *forebodings* frequent in the human mind, and already remarked upon in former places.

Hamlet *to* Horatio.

Thou wouldſt not think how ill all's here about my heart--But 'tis no matter.

Horatio. Nay, my good lord.

Hamlet. It is but foolery; it is but ſuch a kind of gain-giving §, as would, perhaps, *trouble a woman.*

Horatio. If your mind diſlike any thing, obey it. I will foreſtal their repair hither, and ſay you are not fit.

To which the gallant Hamlet replies, with a manly and philoſophic ſpirit,

Hamlet. Not a whit; we defy augury. *There is a ſpecial Providence in the fall of a ſparrow* †. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; *the readineſs is all.* Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?

This is, in my opinion, a much better ſpeech than the one that Julius Cæſar makes, in our Author's Play under that title:

"*Cowards die many times before their deaths*, &c."

* From *yeſt*, or *barm*. In general, it means *ſpumy* or *frothy*.

§ *Gain-giving* for *miſgiving*. A moſt extraordinary kind of *ſynonima*, and only met with here.

† Pope ſeems to have borrowed a hint from this paſſage, where he ſays, ſpeaking of Providence,

"Who ſees with equal eye, as Lord of all,
"A hero periſh, or a ſparrow fall."

POSTSCRIPT.

Shaftesbury, speaking of Hamlet, says, "That "piece of Shakespeare's, which appears to have "most affected English hearts, and has, perhaps, "been oftenest acted of any that have come upon "our stage, is almost one continued moral; a "series of deep reflections drawn from *one* mouth; "upon the subject of *one* single accident and "calamity, naturally fitted to move horror and "compassion.

"It may be said of this Play, if I mistake not, "that it has properly but *one* character, or prin-"cipal part. It contains no adoration or flattery "of *the sex*; no ranting at the gods; no bluster-"ing heroism; nor any thing of that curious "mixture of the fierce and tender, which makes "the hinge of modern tragedy, and nicely varies "it between the points of *love and honour*."

OTHELLO.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

DUKE of Venice.
OTHELLO.
CASSIO.
IAGO.
BRABANTIO.
RODORIGO.

W O M E N.

DESDEMONA.
ÆMILIA.

OTHELLO.

SHAKESPEARE has written three pieces on the ſubject of jealouſy; the Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, and this one, beſides the character of Ford, in the Merry Wives. But ſuch was the richneſs of his genius, that he has not borrowed a ſingle thought, image, or expreſſion, from any one of them, to aſſiſt him in any of the others. The ſubject ſeems rather to have grown progreſſively out of itſelf, to have inſpired its own ſentiments, and have dictated its own language. This Play, in my opinion, is very juſtly conſidered as the laſt and greateſt effort of our Author's genius, and may, therefore, be looked upon as the *chef d'œuvre* of dramatic compoſition.

How perfectly does Othello's conduct throughout, correſpond with Iago's deſcription of it in the latter end of the Firſt Act!

The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honeſt, who but ſeem to be ſo.

Such a character is not uncommon in life; whoſe virtues, ariſing more from an excellence of nature, than an exertion of philoſophy, is led to judge of others by itſelf, and of courſe become the dupe of art and villainy.

ACT I. SCENE IV.

Othello here expreſſes a very juſt and liberal ſenſe of a matrimonial connection.

But that I love the gentle Deſdemona,
I would not my unhouſed free condition
Put into circumſcription, and confine,
For the ſea's worth.

SCENE IX.

The argument between philosophy and feeling, in cases of misfortune or grief, is well debated here. The Duke, preaching patience to the father, upon his daughter's elopement with the Moor, says,

Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best.
Men do their broken weapons rather use,
Than their bare hands.
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended,
By seeing the worst, which late on hope depended;
To mourn a mischief that is lost and gone,
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserved, when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes;
The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief;
He robs himself who spends a bootless grief.

Brabantio. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile,
We lose it not so long as we can smile.
He bears the sentence well, who nothing bears,
But the free comfort which from thence he hears *;
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,
That to pay grief must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences to sugar or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.
But words are words. I never yet did hear,
That the bruised heart was healed through the ear.

I may possibly be reprehended, by some severe moralists, for noting the equipoise of such an argument as this. In this instance, indeed, I confess that I act contrary to the usual tenor of document, which always takes part on the *wise* side of a question. But, as I have said before †, I do not think that ethic philosophy can ever be a gainer, by over-

* Alluding to the homily usually made by a judge, on passing sentence.

† Last Part of Postscript to Julius Cæsar, with other passages referred to in the Notes.

straining

ſtraining the ſinews of the human mind. We ought neither to be votaries to the Cynic nor the Stoic ſects. We ſhould not, with Diogenes, *follow Nature* in the mere animal ſenſe of the expreſſion, nor with Zeno fly beyond it, in the metaphyſical one. True virtue has no extremes. Its ſphere extends not beyond the *Temperate* Zones. It ſleeps in the Frozen, and but raves in the Torrid ones.

SCENE X.

I have before obſerved upon the exuberance of Shakeſpeare's document and moral. He ſo much abounds in maxim and reflection, that he appears frequently at a loſs to find proper characters, throughout even his own extenſive drama, ſufficient to parcel them out to; ſo that he is frequently obliged to make his fools talk ſenſe, and ſet his knaves a preaching. An inſtance of the latter impropriety may be ſeen in the following paſſage, which contains both ſound philoſophy, and uſeful admonition. But that it may have the better effect on my readers, I wiſh that whenever they remember the ſpeech, they could contrive to forget the ſpeaker.

Rodorigo. What ſhould I do? I confeſs it is my ſhame to be ſo fond; but it is not in my *virtue* to amend it.

Iago. Virtue? a fig. *'Tis in ourſelves that we are thus, or thus.* Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners. So that if we will plant nettles, or ſow lettuce; ſet hyſſop, and weed up thyme; ſupply it with one gender of herbs, or diſtract it with many; either have it ſterile with idleneſs, or manured with induſtry; why the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our will. If the ballance of our lives had not one ſcale of reaſon, to poiſe another of ſenſuality, the blood and baſeneſs of our natures would conduct us to moſt prepoſterous concluſions.

The

The plea that Rodorigo offers above, for remaining ſtill under the dominion of a lawleſs paſſion, is framed upon a fatal error, too prevalent in the world, that *virtue* is a peculiar gift from Heaven, granted *ſpeciali gratiâ*, as it were, to particular and choſen perſons. Hence indolent minds are apt to conclude it a vain taſk to reſtrain their paſſions, or reſiſt their temptations, without the ſupernatural aid of ſuch an innate endowment. Iago, in his reply, reaſons very juſtly againſt this dangerous and diſcouraging doctrine of *partial grace*; in ſupport of which argument I ſhall here add a paſſage from a modern writer, who, ſpeaking on this ſubject, ſays, "The difficulties we apprehend, more than thoſe "we find, in the ſtrife with all our paſſions, is the "only thing that prevents philoſophy or virtue from "being commonly attainable in general life. What "makes the difference between a chaſte woman, "and a frail one? *The one had ſtruggled, and the* "*other not.* Between a brave man and a coward? "*The one had ſtruggled, and the other not.* An "honeſt man and a knave? *One had ſtruggled, the* "*other not* *."

ACT II. SCENE XIV.

There is a good deal of after-wit reflection here, which, however, may ſerve as a forewarning, perhaps, to ſome of my Readers. Iago ſeeing Caſſio deſponding on being caſhiered by Othello, aſks if he be hurt? To which he replies,

Caſſio. Paſt all ſurgery.—Reputation, reputation, reputation! *Oh, I have loſt the immortal part of me, and what remains is beſtial.* Oh, thou inviſible ſpirit of wine! if thou haſt no name to be known by, let us call thee Devil.——— I will aſk him for my poſt again, and he ſhall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths

* The Poſthumous Works of a late Celebrated Genius deceaſed.

as

as Hydra, ſuch an anſwer would ſtop them all. To be now a ſenſible man, by and by a fool, and preſently a beaſt! Every inordinate cup is unbleſſed, and the ingredient is a devil.

ACT III. SCENE V.

The following paſſage will ſpeak for itſelf:

Iago. Good name, in man or woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their ſouls.
Who ſteals my purſe, ſteals traſh, 'tis ſomething, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been ſlave to thouſands:
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor, indeed.

In the ſame Scene, Othello, while his alarmed mind is ſtruggling between confidence and conviction, delivers himſelf on the ſubject with a liberal and manly ſpirit.

Think'ſt thou I'd make a life of jealouſy?
To follow ſtill the changes of the moon,
With freſh ſuſpicions? No—To be once in doubt,
Is once to be reſolved. Exchange me for a goat,
When I ſhall turn the buſineſs of my ſoul
To ſuch exſuffolate * and blown ſurmiſes †,
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous,
To ſay my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of ſpeech, ſings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, theſe are moſt virtuous.
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The ſmalleſt fear or doubt of her revolt.
For ſhe had eyes, and choſe me. No, Iago,
I'll ſee, before I doubt; when I doubt prove;
And on the proof there is no more but this,
Away, at once, with love or jealouſy.

* *Exſuffolate*, buzzing.

† He compares theſe whiſpered ſlanders to water-bubbles floating in the air.

SCENE

SCENE XII.

It has often ſurprized me, to find the character of Deſdemona ſo much miſtaken and ſlighted, as it too generally is. It is ſimple, indeed, but that is one of its merits: for the ſimplicity of it is that of *innocence*, not of *folly*. In my opinion, ſhe ſeems to be as perfect a model of a wife, as either this author, or any other writer, could poſſibly have framed. She ſpeaks little; but whatever ſhe ſays is ſenſible, pure, and chaſte. The remark ſhe makes in this place, on the alteration of Othello's manners towards her, affords a very proper admonition to all women in her ſituation and circumſtances.

Something, ſure, of ſtate
Hath puddled his clear ſpirit; and, in ſuch caſes,
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even ſo—
For let our finger ake, and it endues
Our other healthful members with a ſenſe
Of pain. *Nay, we muſt think men are not gods;*
Nor of them look for ſuch obſervance always,
As fits the bridal.

She had ſaid to himſelf before,

Be't as your fancies teach you—
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

And afterwards, in confeſſing herſelf before Iago and Æmilia,

Here I kneel—
If e'er my will did treſpaſs 'gainſt his love,
Or in diſcourſe, or thought, or actual deed,
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any ſenſe
Delighted them on any other form;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will, though he do ſhake me off
To beggarly divorcement, love him dearly;
Comfort forſwear me! Unkindneſs may do much,

And

And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love.

And further on, where Æmilia says to her, of Othello,

I wish you had never seen him!

She replies,

So would not I. *My love doth so approve him,*
That ev'n his stubbornness, his checks and frowns,
Have grace and favour in them.

As the married state is both the dearest and most social connection of life, I think this a proper passage to conclude my observations with, on a work in which is comprehended the compleatest system of the œconomical and moral duties of human nature, that perhaps was ever framed by the wisdom, philosophy, or experience of *uninspired* man.

A

GENERAL POSTSCRIPT.

THERE are many favourite passages in Shakespeare, which most of my Readers have got by heart, and missing here, may possibly object to my having neglected to quote or observe upon them, in their proper places. But my intention, in this Work, was not to propound the beauties of the Poet, but to expound the document of the Moralist, throughout his writings.

So far from being insensible to the other excellencies of this Author, I have ever thought him by much the greatest poet of our nation, for sublimity of idea, and beauty of expression. Perhaps I may even think myself guilty of some injustice, in limiting his fame within the narrow confines of these kingdoms; for, upon a comparison with the much venerated names of Antiquity, I am of opinion, that we need not surrender the British Palm, either to the Grecian Bay, or the Roman Laurel, with regard to the principal parts of poetry; as thought, sentiment, or description — And though the dead languages are confessed to be superior to ours, yet even here, in the very article of diction, our Author shall measure his pen with any of the antient *styles*, in their most admired compound and decompound epithets, descriptive phrases, or figurative expressions. *The multitudinous sea, ear-piercing fife, big war, giddy mast, sky-aspiring, heaven-kissing hill, time-honoured name, cloud-capt towers, heavenly-harnassed team, rash gunpowder,*

polished

polished perturbation, gracious silence, golden care, trumpet-tongued, thought-executing fires; with a number of other words, both epic and comic, are instances of it. But with regard to the moral excellencies of our English *Confucius*, either for beauty or number, he undoubtedly challenges the wreath from the whole collective Host of Greek or Roman Writers, whether ethic, epic, dramatic, didactic, or historic.

Mrs. Montagu says, very justly, that "We are "apt to consider Shakespeare only as a poet; but "he is certainly one of the greatest moral philo-"sophers that ever lived." And this is true; because, in his universal scheme of doctrine, he comprehends manners, proprieties, and decorums; and whatever relates to these, to personal character, or national description, falls equally within the great line of morals. Horace prefers Homer to all the philosophers,

Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius et melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.

And surely Shakespeare *plenius et melius* excels him again, as much as the living scene exceeds the dead letter, as action is preferable to didaction, or representation to declamation.

Example is better than precept. A dramatic moral affords us the benefit of both, at once. Plato wished that Virtue could assume a visible form. Dramatic exhibition gives one, both to Virtue and to Vice. The abstract idea is there materialized. The contrast of character, too, affords an additional strength to the moral; as we are led to love virtue, on a double account, by being made to abhor vice, at the same time. The dramatic moralist possesses a manifest advantage over the doctrinal one. Mere descriptions of virtue or vice do not strike us, so strongly, as the visible representations of them.

Richard

Richard the Third's dream, Lady Macbeth's soliloquy in her sleep, the Dagger Scene in the same Play, Cardinal Beaufort's last moments, with many other passages in our Author, of the same admonitory kind, avail us more than whole volumes of Tully's Offices, or Seneca's Morals.

In this scenic province of instruction, our representations are much better calculated to answer the end proposed, than those of the Antients were, on account of the different hours of exhibition. Theirs were performed in the morning; which circumstance suffered the salutary effect to be worn out of the mind, by the business or avocations of the day. Ours are at night; the impressions accompany us to our couch, supply matter for our latest reflections, and may sometimes furnish the subject of our very dreams.

But Shakespeare seems to have extended his views still further; by frequently intersperſing allusions to the Scriptures, throughout his writings. I would not have the old *Mysteries* restored to the Stage, nor should Dramatic Dialogue exceed into Sermons; but I think that such occasional hints or passages, as this Author has supplied, when thrown in sparingly, and introduced with discretion, may sometimes serve to add a strength and dignity to the style and subject of such compositions; besides the advantage of producing, perhaps, effects of an higher nature, by calling our attention to more serious reflections, in the very midst of our pleasures and dissipations, without sinking our spirits, or damping our enjoyments; awakening us to the contemplation of a religion so pure, so equally free from the severities of discipline, and the superstitions of devotion; of a system of theology, framed even as Man himself would chuse; in fine, of a faith and doctrine, which has but stronger bound the social ties, given an higher sanction to moral obligations,

obligations, and proved our duty to be our interest also.

Having now arrived at the last page of my task, I must confess the apprehensions I am sensible of, on presenting to the Public a Work of so much difficulty and danger: though with regard to the first of these articles, I acknowledge this to have been one in the class of those, of which Ferdinand in the Tempest says,

There be some sports are painful, but their labour
Delight in them sets off.

But in respect to the latter, I must here throw myself not only upon the candor, but the indulgence of my Readers; hoping that the many failures in the execution may be pardoned, on the single merit of the design.

THE END.